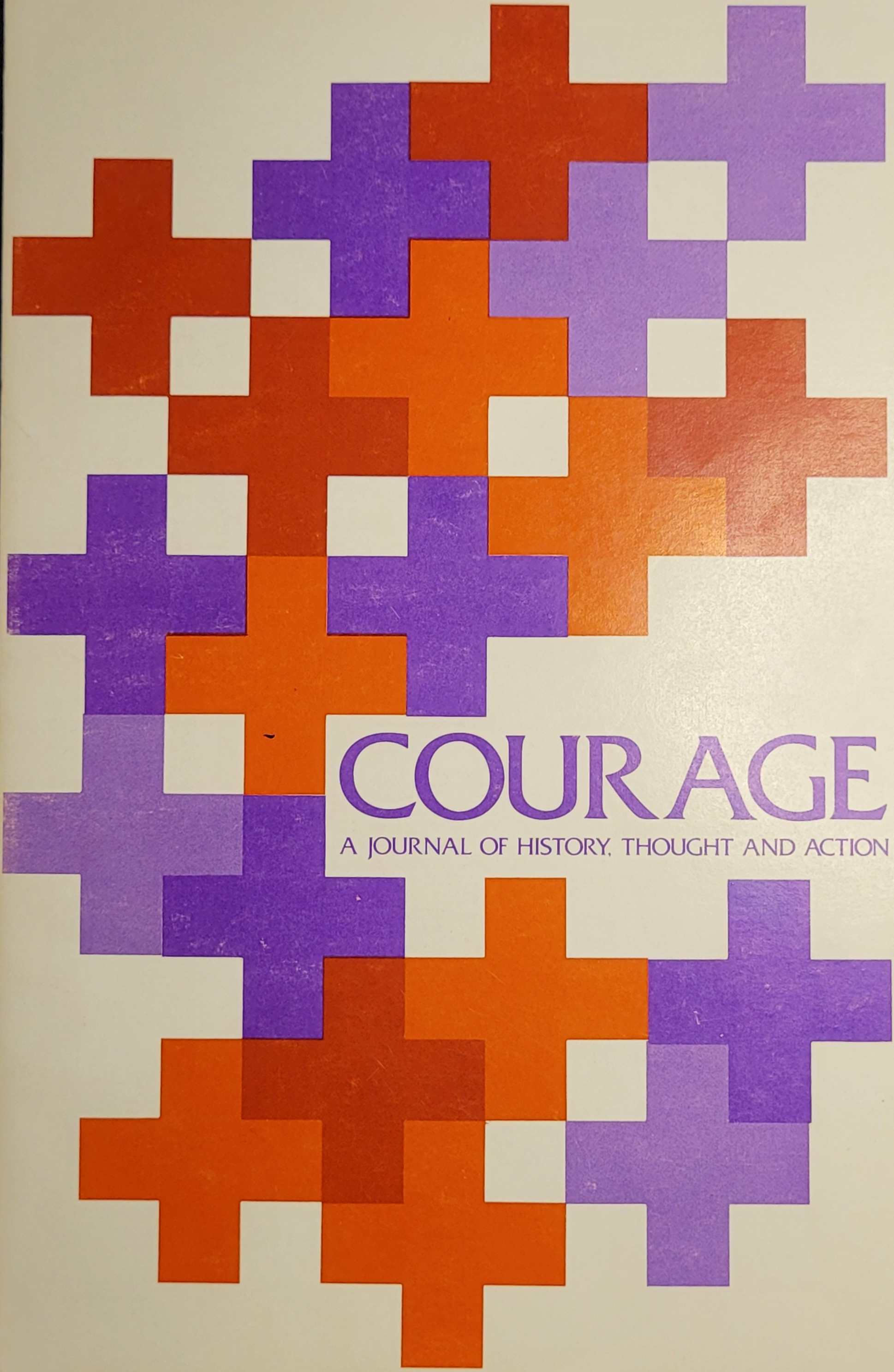
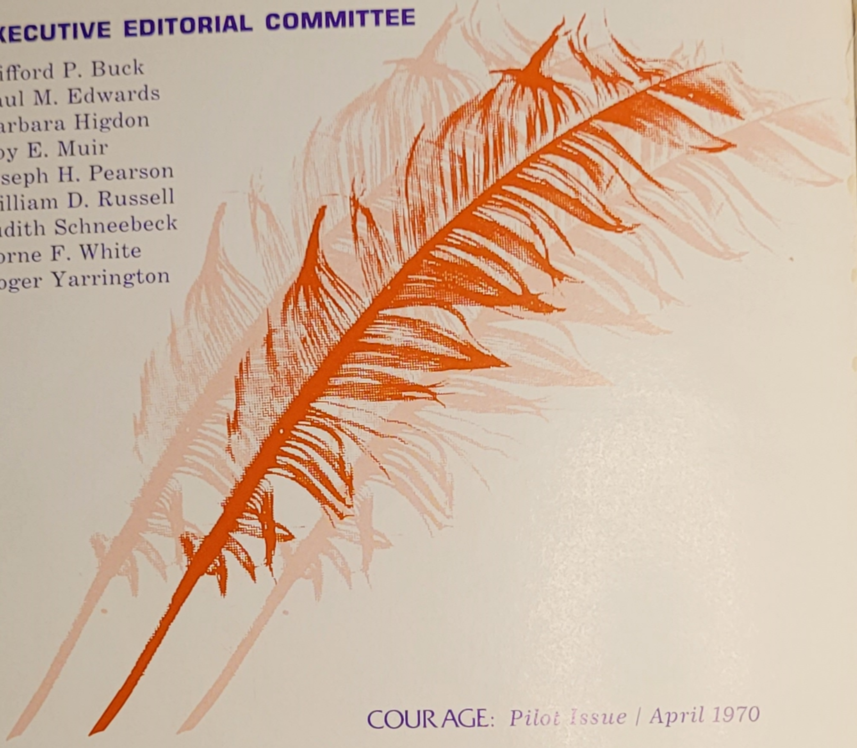


COURAGE

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, THOUGHT AND ACTION

EXECUTIVE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Clifford P. Buck
Paul M. Edwards
Barbara Higdon
Roy E. Muir
Joseph H. Pearson
William D. Russell
Judith Schneebeck
Lorne F. White
Roger Yarrington



COURAGE: *Pilot Issue / April 1970*

COPY EDITOR: Louise Hunt

ART DIRECTOR: Barney Newcom

Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action is published as a means of expression for independent thought. It is edited by individuals belonging to or associated with the Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church, who are convinced that free discussion of issues is necessary for the well-being of the church and its members. *Courage* has no official connection with either Graceland College or the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Articles published represent the views of the individual authors only, and not necessarily those of the editors.

A major purpose for *Courage* is to make possible a dialogue between people representing different backgrounds and persuasions. *Courage* welcomes articles, letters, and book reviews from any interested contributors. Such contributions are encouraged from those with differing views. *Courage* is published by the Venture Foundation, 106 East South, Lamoni, Iowa 50140. Manuscripts should be sent in duplicate, with return postage if the author would like them returned.

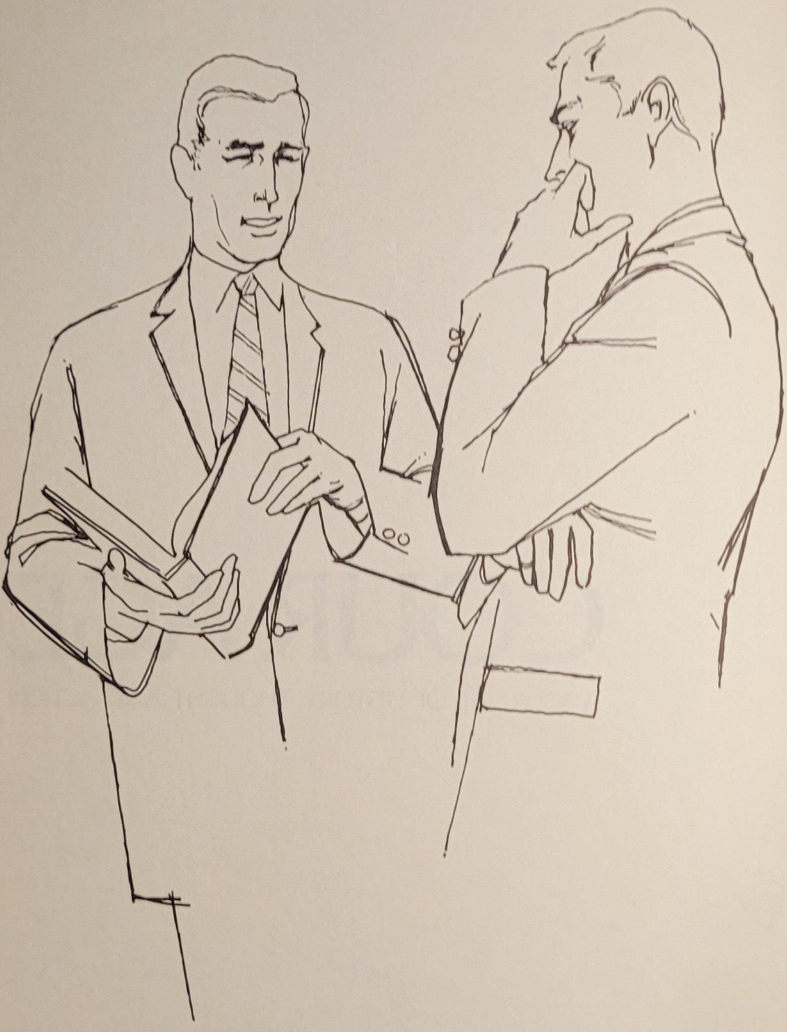
Courage will be published quarterly in September, December, March, and June. Regular publication will begin with the September, 1970 issue. Subscription and change of address requests should be sent to *Courage*, 106 East South, Lamoni, Iowa 50140. Subscription rate in the United States and Canada is $6.00 per year. Add $1.00 per year for other countries.

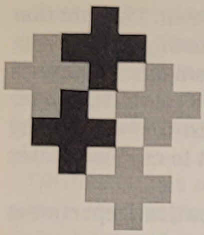
15660 lacks 1:2 & 3:1

75.00/
8 vols.

COURAGE

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, THOUGHT AND ACTION





A Question of Means or Ends:

The Debate Over Religious Education

Donald D. Landon

Our security lies not in the fact we now have a final hold on truth, as if we ever could, but in the fact that we are in relationship to one whose good-pleasure it is to sustain us in the conscientious search for truth and meaning.

The debate currently going on whether the Religious Education Department and its proposed new graded curriculum are faithful or unfaithful to the church provides an opportunity to reflect on some major issues which have been pushing on us for years. Questions have been raised whether or not the new curriculum will teach the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Inspired Version of the Bible. It is being asked if the materials will be distinctively RLDS. Concern is raised whether it will teach "the true doctrine given us by God or will it spend all its time on worldly concerns?" to quote a recent inquiry. For the most part the debate centers around the issue of "particularism" — whether or not the new curriculum will maintain a traditional image of the RLDS church as the one true church, served by a truly authorized priesthood, and possessing the fulness of the gospel through direct revelation.

The statement of the issue in these terms captures a significant problem in the church's thought. *It is the contention of this paper that the present debate over the church's educational ministries centers in a confusion over means and ends.* This confusion arises out of the effort of the church to justify itself in the presence of many other churches by elevating beliefs and books, doctrines and distinctives, history and heritage, practices and procedures from their rightful role as means or resources for discipleship to ends in themselves. Thus, the purpose of religion is seen to be indoctrination in belief. Scriptures and doctrine are treated as guaranteed truths. Revelation and the record of revelation become fused, resulting in dogmatism about what is known. The fact that these are the measurables by which our identity is distinguished from other church bodies, and that qualitative distinction from other churches has been a preoccupation for many — has led some to establish proper belief as the ultimate purpose of Christian faith. With this developing mind-set one is tempted to believe it is more important to espouse Latter Day Saint beliefs than to practice Christianity.

That over the years the work of the Religious Education Department should be the focus of debate from some quarters of the church is understandable. It is here that the hard question has had to be asked and answered, To what end are we educating? What is the goal of Christian nurture? The scriptures do not equivocate on the question. Men are to be taught to be disciples — persons who can re-present in their own lives the life of radical love set before them in Christ Jesus. This has to do with exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit, being agents of reconciliation among their fellows, taking responsibility for the lives of others, establishing justice and evidencing a self-sacrificing concern for all men. This style of life called discipleship is the end or goal of faith.

The next question is, How is such a life nurtured? What resources do you bring to bear on it in order that it shall be love-able? Now we are talking about means. And it is here that beliefs, doctrines, scriptures, history and heritage ought to become pressed into the service of discipleship. It is here they demonstrate their authority. For if they truly illuminate, illustrate, instruct and motivate discipleship, their validity is functionally established. But if they are taught essentially as ends in themselves, items to be mastered, propositions to be affirmed, beliefs to be assented to, then their power has been compromised and their authority unestablished.

Religious Experience Foundational

The Christian educator must begin his work in the awareness that the Christian faith is primarily experiential, not intellectual. God did not give us an idea or a doctrine, he gave us a person, Christ Jesus. In his presence and through his fellowship the first followers found their lives changed. They experienced themselves forgiven and reconciled to God and each other. They sensed they had been incorporated into a new and divine community and had received a new and divine life. They knew all this happened through Christ. It was the consequence of their experience of salvation in Him that they began reflecting on the meaning of what had happened. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they formulated that meaning into ideas, doctrines, and beliefs which in the company of their own new life style helped to communicate to others their faith and provide the occasion for the experience to be had for another person.

Moreover, it is crucial for the Christian educator to remember that Jesus continued to be known among people after his death. In other words, the church was not left to simply teach the faith and ask men to assent to the statements describing the meaning of what only a few had experienced. The person and fellowship of Jesus Christ continued to be known and felt among the fellowship and therefore men continued to have experiences and translate them into words, statements, beliefs, doctrines, all of which were meant to *point* to the experience, *not to take its place.*

Obviously, one of the imminent dangers confronting the church in all ages is the temptation to develop a fixation on the words and ideas that *describe* or interpret the faith experience and begin teaching them *as the faith* itself. We see this happening very early in the history of Christianity. Under the influence of Greek metaphysics and the pressure to establish a standard of belief which would protect the church from heresy, a doctrine of revelation arose which suggested that God communicated divinely guaranteed truths to the church. This promoted the feeling that what Christianity really amounted to was a set of truths superior to human knowledge available any place else. The experiential dimension became secondary. Faith was less a whole-life response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and more an assent to a set of divinely delivered truths. Faithfulness became more a matter of espousing the right beliefs than doing the will of God.

Latter Day Saintism was born in the awareness that creeds were an abomination. The business of elevating beliefs and doctrines into being the prime focus of faith was judged abominable and remains so for several reasons:

1. The creation of any statement of theological or doctrinal interpretation which suggests finality or inclusiveness is in violation both of the nature of faith and the nature of revelation. All theological and doctrinal formulations are approximate. While they are critically necessary to guide the development of our faith and point us to the reality they attempt to describe, they are all historically conditioned and provisional and become tyrannical if absolutized. A case in point is John McLeod Campbell who in 1856 wrote what came to be a classic in Scottish theology, *The Nature of the Atonement.* Twenty-five years earlier, however, he was deposed from the ministry of the church of Scotland for teaching that God's reconciling grace is offered to all men and not just to a pre-destined few, this being contrary to the then dogmatically held Calvinist doctrine of election.
2. The primary focus of faith is Jesus Christ who is not reduceable to propositions. Doctrines and beliefs guide us in our understanding of him and facilitate our experience of him, but Christ is not a belief, he is a living reality and seeks to be *known,* not just known *about.* If beliefs about him come to be the prime focus of our commitment, the experiential base on which the faith is built disappears and we have simply another metaphysical system. Was it not Paul who said, "I know whom (not *what*) I have believed." (I Tim. 1:12)

3. If the experience of Christ is on-going, then reflection on that experience is an on-going task which infers the open-endedness and tentativeness of the whole theological and doctrinal enterprise. Latter Day Saints have embodied this understanding in their assertion of continuing revelation.

4. To propose a creed or a set of beliefs as a focus of our faith again confuses means and ends. The temptation is to conclude that Christianity is essentially intellectual — words and ideas that are to be learned for the sake of assent. Our evangelism often communicates this image of faith. If we feel that the proper preparation for inviting someone to become part of the faith is to present them six or eight lectures setting forth correct beliefs on church organization, doctrine, apostasy, restoration, life after death, and the Book of Mormon, are we not really suggesting that the essence of faith is assent to ideas? Moreover, when we employ beliefs as a basis of articulating our faith is it not crucial that we determine what convictions faithfully project the faith? For example, would we not have to weigh beliefs about the Lordship of Jesus, suffering love, missional service, and redeeming grace against such beliefs as apostasy, the origin of the Book of Mormon or church organization in deciding what ideas faithfully point to the gospel?

Denominationalism and the "Truth Ethic"

The preoccupation of many churches with beliefs reflects the power of denominationalism to distort the gospel. I suspect there is an intrinsic universal temptation to creedalism, given the pluralistic nature of Christianity in America. In the face of many other churches, one attempts to win a niche for himself on the grounds of having more truth than others. Sectarian groups such as our own often begin with such a "truth ethic" guiding their development. Their authority becomes predicated on the right doctrine they espouse. Their preoccupation is to be right where others are wrong, to have a more comprehensive base of belief than others. This is both understandable and in a sense valid. The risk, however, is that in being preoccupied with building up a repository of truth one will assume that that is really the *goal* of the faith. The claims of the "love ethic" become second to the claims of the "truth ethic." It almost appears that it is more important to *believe* the right thing than it is to *do* the right thing. One comes to feel that the first commandment is to seek true doctrines, and in second place is the command to love his neighbor.

Such a strong denominational defensiveness tends to drive a church to define itself in terms of the beliefs it holds rather than the works of love it does. So strong can the "truth ethic" become in shaping our outlook that it not only dictates the style and content of our Christian education (which I suggest has been true in our case) but it can also lead us to believe that our very acceptability to God is a function of how right our ideas and our doctrines are. We perhaps could be helped a great deal in our feelings about truth and the way we go about discovering it if we were more aware of God's grace. Our relationship to him is a function of his goodness and not our merit, be it moral or intellectual. Christ did not die for us once we got *out* of our sins or errors. As Paul reminds us, he died for us while we were yet *in* our sins, which is Paul's way of declaring that our relationship with God is not earned or deserved, it is a gift of his grace. In the same light we must acknowledge that Christ died for us while we were still in our errors, too, and we are therefore free to be continuously honest and candid upon the state of our knowledge.

People informed by a strong "truth ethic" are often compulsive defenders of what they see as the divine truths mediated directly to the church. Somehow they feel their spiritual life depends upon it, and in a way it does. But what we are called to acknowledge is that our acceptableness to God is not a function of the rightness of all our ideas or beliefs. He loved us and died for us when we were deeply immersed in misunderstanding and error. Our security lies not in the fact we now have a final hold on truth, as if we ever could, but in the fact that we are in relationship to one whose good-pleasure it is to sustain us in the conscientious search for truth and meaning.

Such an understanding frees us to accept the tentativeness of our understanding, and liberates us to acknowledge and live with partial truths and limited perspectives. Moreover, it protects us from the temptation to escalate any of our partial understandings into some sort of dogmatic total system.

This is particularly important for people in our time to grasp. The contemporary explosion of knowledge has revealed that its true shape is something like a pyramid. We have found the top. The more we discover the more aware we are of the breadth of that which is still unknown. From the time of the enlightenment and Galileo's telescope, people with a fixation on the "true ethic" and escalated opinions about the completeness and finality of their beliefs, have been shaken to discover that many things they they thought were true proved to be otherwise. Such revelations are bound to continue and dogmatic religion will suffer the most. We do well to remember that God has never guaranteed us that he will give us true ideas or doctrines. What he has guaranteed us is himself and his love. If the basis of our religious life is a relationship with what we feel are infallible truths then we probably have great reason to be insecure since it is altogether possible that as knowledge increases we may find ourselves separated from what we had felt was infallibly so. What we can't be separated from is God. It is Him we are called to be in relationship to. The pursuit of understanding is an integral part of that relationship, to be sure, but it never supersedes it.

Someone has suggested that the highest use of a shaken time is to discover what is unshakeable. If we are discovering that the "truth ethic" has led us into problems, we may go back to the New Testament in the spirit of true restorationism and discover the primacy of the "love ethic." The primary truth we are called to know is that God has entered our world in the person of Christ Jesus and is calling all men to a new and divine life of love. That we shall need beliefs and doctrines to guide us in the implementation of that new life is clear, but they shall be means and not ends.

Heritage in the Service of Discipleship

Few would argue that the purpose of the Christian faith is to renew human life and create love-able people. Few would argue that in the final analysis, the true mark of Christian identity is the love that is shown, not the beliefs that are held. Our problem is the willingness to act radically on this premise, to put discipleship above belief and truly subject belief to the service of discipleship.

If we acted radically on this conviction then the questions we address to our educational leaders would tend to take this appearance.

1. Are you rigorous in searching the three standard books for insights, experiences, and examples which can truly foster discipleship in our people?
2. What are the resources available uniquely in the RLDS experience and tradition which can inform and enable the Christian life in the 20th century?
3. How can the Book of Mormon be brought to bear as an enabling tool for discipleship? What are its unique insights that guide our expression of faith?
4. What in the traditions of our origins and founding experiences can be evoked as relevant guidance in living the witnessing life today?
5. What provision is being made for students to encounter the living reality to which the beliefs point and thereby call them to the task of interpretation?

Such questions illustrate taking seriously the notion that discipleship, not sheer belief, is the end toward which we are called to move.

Some present experiences in the church tend to show the price we pay for confusing means with ends. The "truth ethic" which has guided much of our education and evangelism has left us, for example, with limited resources of reconciliation with which to deal with the kind of conflict now present in the church. Our strategies of resolution including personal vilification, destruction of trust and politicizing large segments of the church are learned directly from the world. They give no Christian witness, and they betray the fact that we preferred to teach abstract truths rather than nurture disciples competent in interpersonal relations and reconciling conflicts.

Furthermore, the kind of hysteria present in some quarters suggesting that the process of examining our interpretations of our faith is cutting at the juglar vein of the church shows that some have substituted a trust in tradition and teaching for a trust in God. Many of our present fears are rooted in such a misplacement of our trust. That such fear is present is symptomatic of our confusing means and ends.

Not a few are concerned over the seeming inability of the church to bring together and deploy its resources to minister directly to the concrete human problems of the day. A great lethargy confronts us here. Many congregations are trying and some are succeeding, but rather than being a natural expression of our understanding of discipleship it often requires a re-education. The "truth ethic" has tended to obscure the "love ethic."

Studies done recently by the Education Commission reveal that among our membership the strongest consensus gathers around our understanding of who we are (the true church) and considerably less consensus about what we should be about. This again illustrates the problem of our preoccupation with means and our transmuting them into ends.

If we can take seriously the fact that responsible discipleship is what God is seeking in us, and discipleship expresses itself in a distinct life-style, not a catalog of beliefs, then we shall be free to put all the resources of our heritage in the service of faith. We shall ask of our scriptures, what can you say to us which will inform and instruct us in the decision making which is at the heart of discipleship? We will ask of our doctrine, how does this illuminate my life and provide a truth which can be done? We will ask of our tradition, how does this clarify my duty and provide motivation to be God's man today?

The critical issue from the educational standpoint is to be clear on the difference between means and ends, and then gather up all the constructive resources of our tradition and bring them to bear on the task of nurturing disciples. We simply cannot be content to communicate canons of belief and feel we have served the faith. In fact, as our awareness of the goal becomes clearer we will find ourselves thrust with new urgency into the task of creating additional means of accomplishment. The ongoing task of theological statement, doctrinal development, scriptural development, can be undertaken with new seriousness and a new freedom and the authority of our work will be established by the disciples it bears.

Donald D. Landon is Director of the Department of Religious Education for the RLDS Church.

The Church As I See It:

Now and in the Future

Chris B. Hartshorn

The RLDS Church is traditionally and of necessity orthodox and fundamental. No denomination can make the historic and religious claims that we make and not be labeled as fundamental.

There are two reasons for my going on record concerning my church in this new magazine: (1) The request of its editors, and (2) The possibility of effecting some changes in current trends which are disturbing some of our members.

To conserve space and promote clarity I may be blunt and may even sound intolerant. May I assure my readers that no offense to those holding opposite views is intended.

The RLDS church is traditionally and of necessity orthodox and fundamental. No denomination can make the historic and religious claims that we make and not be labeled as fundamental. This does not mean that our leaders have claimed plenary dictation of its scriptures from God nor that the prophet-leaders were infallible.

Where I differ from my liberal brethren is that they see so many reasons to doubt that our Three Standard Books are divinely inspired, there remains only humanity in all of them. Thus scholasticism gains control over spiritual insight. However, what comes through human minds, as all our scriptures have come, are subject to error or limitation.

Someone has pointed out that the trouble with the church today is that, "the unlearned are so cocksure and the intellectuals are so full of doubt." Of course, there are many people that fall between these two classes of Saints.

Jesus is not quoted as claiming perfection. Like others, he "increased in wisdom, and stature, and favor with God and man." This shows that even the Son of God had fleshly limitations. He did claim that the doctrine he taught, as he began his ministry, was given him of God. "He gave me a commandment what I should say, . . . and his commandment is life everlasting" (John 12:49,50; II Nephi 9:46). This passage is very significant.

There are uninspired passages in our scriptures, but as Paul declared, "All scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter added his testimony to the claim for scriptural divinity: "No prophecy of the scripture is given by any private will of man . . . but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter:20,21).

The validity of these statements has been challenged. The doubtings of those who have seminary degrees need not destroy our faith or our testimony. Not all come out of these schools with the same doctrinal beliefs. Had I been less grounded in my faith, the teachers in Drake University Bible college would have unfitted me for the ministry I have given my church. However, I studied to approve myself unto God, "rightly dividing the word of truth," and He gave me light and discrimination.

Dr. Elton Trueblood sounded a warning note in his fine book, *A Place to Stand*: "Whatever else academic philosophy may do in our generation, it is improbable that it will provide desperate men and women with a firm place to stand in the place of the present confusion and complexity about values. Indeed the forfeiture of values is one of the saddest elements in the plight of the big universities, and the department of philosophy must bear a large measure of responsibility for this development." (p. 31)

And he states further: "It is popular in some circles to accept Jesus Christ as a teacher, but not as one who provides a unique revelation of the Father. The familiar stance is one that involves admiring comments about Christ, but denies any supernaturalism. Such a position, however, cannot be defended rationally, since all four gospels bristle with supernatural claims on the part of Jesus." (Ibid p. 41)

Spiritual Interpretation

It takes little intelligence to criticize and raise doubts. Only faith and divine help provide right answers. My church has never been dogmatic. Our people do not believe in a blind faith and our scriptures need interpretation. Our right to examine and vote on documents, which come to us as revelations, is based on the "law of consistency." Isaiah affirmed: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Joseph Smith Jr. wrote John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat* in 1842; "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." (*Church History* Vol. 2, p. 570) The Latter Day Prophet also affirmed: "The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world" (D. & C. 83:7c). Some do not discern or accept this light.

Joseph Smith Jr. alleged that in his fifteenth year he sought God in prayer while alone in a grove to learn which denomination, of the three which had joined in a revival service, he should join. He saw a light in which appeared two personages, God the Father and his son Jesus Christ. He was told to join none of the churches, but that there was a work for him to do in due time.

William Smith, Joseph's brother, in *Zion's Ensign* of Jan. 13, 1894, said that only after Joseph told of this vision and experience in the grove was their family ridiculed and persecuted. Orson Pratt's *Journal* of Dec. 29, 1833, relates that Elder Ezra Landen was excommunicated for preaching that the "vision was of the devil." In 1840, Orson Pratt published a statement about the vision and the two personages appearing to Joseph. In *Time and Seasons* of April 1, 1842, Joseph expands on the vision by quoting God as saying, "This is My Beloved Son, hear him."

Philosophy and Religion

Persons who accept the foregoing paragraphs as valid reasoning and divine truth will see that this church cannot accept theological liberalism as a sound philosophy. A self-revealing God, who now is, and always has been; who caused to be written that which is sufficient for man's redemption and eternal salvation, just cannot be pushed aside by man's philospohy or his doubts. It was He who caused the prophet leaders on this western continent to write on imperishable plates that which we now possess in the form of the Book of Mormon; and also caused eleven men to bear witness that they had seen and handled those plates. He gave authority to men who built a church which conforms to holy scriptural records, even at the cost of their own lives; such a God and such a church has vitality.

This is the fundamentalism which I affirm. I am not about to give it up for a universal church of all Christian worshippers. Ecumenism is an impractical idealism without a solid foundation. Nor am I accepting as authoritative "a priesthood of all believers." If all Christians hold priesthood authority, then it is a vapid thing, without any serious significance. Jesus told his disciples. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (John 15:16). A denial of these premises is apostacy, "a falling away" from the Restoration faith (2 Thes. 2:3).

The future of the church depends at least on two basic issues: the direction or trend of our leadership and the manifest power and love of God.

Leadership and Common Consent

For a century our ministry has presented the church as a theocratic democracy. This acknowledges the intermediate control of the Divine and common consent of the members. The present trends show that these are not now in ascendency. Many feel that we have moved towards bureaucratic leadership with common assent. The important decisions are made by the Joint Council of The First Presidency, the Council of Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. These segments of the church have lately been organized into and implemented by several commissions.

The World Conference of delegates and ex-officii will be allowed to debate issues, but many of these may, if recent practices are followed, be called up for conference action late, be referred to the Joint Council, or a part of it, for disposition; and thus common consent will be aborted.

The end result of these procedures may be disillusionment of the membership and disunity in the church. If the experiences of the 1920's are any criterion, the channel of remonstrance against this unilateral situation will be a withholding of financial support. This is not a laudable method of bringing about the desired results, and is fraught with very serious and long-lasting consequences, both personal and church-wide.

It seems to some that the administration is top-heavy with clerical and assistant administrative personnel. The problem is intensified by our national and church-wide financial stringencies. Doubtless, their help does release the church officials for their appointed tasks in serving the church, but it is hard to accept this logic, when the Auditorium overhead load seems to be at the expense of our missionary activities. Every nook and corner in this great building has been fashioned into an office for another worker, and a new wing is to be added to the Auditorium which indicates that the process may continue.

It has been pointed out to me that our annual net membership growth has gone to a new low of less than 1 per cent. It is very doubtful that the church can survive on this marginal increase. Much of this numerical increase, it is observed, comes from foreign fields which are not financially self-sustaining. Our mission to bear witness of "this gospel of the kingdom in all the world" must go on, and needs high priority. However, to make it most effective, the church membership must be united in its gospel teachings. A divided, unstable body will not sustain even this small growth. The Saints must be able and willing to support these new missions and branches in a meaningful way. Our failure to give this support will make our proselyting of questionable value.

Bishorpric's Responsibility

Section 129:8 given in 1909, directed that, "The temporalities of the church were to be under the charge and care of the Bishopric . . . caring for and distributing the moneys and properties." All ordained bishops are included in this responsibility. In practice the Joint Council of Presidency, the Council of the Twelve and the Presiding Bishops only set the administrative policies. This has been modified to some extent near General Conference time by having the whole Order of Bishops act on the Board of Appropriations.

There is a resolution pending which will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the Bishopric to function as custodian of the trust funds of the church. It also will conflict with G.C.R. 915 in which the Presiding

Bishopric are "answerable to the church in General Conference assembled," for such funds. It is proposed (Herald Dec. 5, 1969, p.5) "That the annual budgets for the world church be prepared by a committee composed of one member of the First Presidency, one from the Council of Twelve, and one from the Presiding Bishopric." This committee "shall be assisted" by the other two members of the Presiding Bishopric and others it may select. However, the decision will remain two to one against the member of the Presiding Bishopric.

Still more obviously slanted in the resolution is the plan of organization of the Board of appropriations, which now consists of the First Presidency, the Twelve, and the Order of Bishops. There are now 53 active members in the Order of Bishops. It is now proposed to keep the Presidency and the Twelve, but to add to the Presiding Bishopric, a high priest, a Seventy, and 14 bishops, nominated by the Presiding Bishop, "with concurrent nominations by the World Conference." This Board of Appropriations is to submit the budget it approves to the Conference for action. Since the bishops, other than the three in the Presiding Bishopric who are ex-officio members of this committee, are to be selected by the World Conference, any consideration they could give during the busy conference sessions would be quite superficial and ineffective for lack of time.

This will put the church back in much the same status as it was in 1925-32. It would seem that a similar reaction can be expected when the membership realizes fully the full implications of this resolution. It is conceded that the presently constituted board is large and cumbersome. I think however the plan proposed to repair this fault is a sad commentary on the judgment of those responsible for the resolution. It nullifies GCR 915 without rescinding it.

While this resolution has not become law, its intent and nature are obviously to subordinate the influence of the bishops in their "charge and care" of church trust funds. This is a cause of some uneasiness and concern among knowledgeable church members, who know the history of the Reorganization, especially during the period of 1920 to 1940. Should this resolution pass the 1970 World Conference, the final and more effective action will likely come by the members withholding funds. Why should it now be necessary to stir up these already troubled waters?

Coordinate Functioning

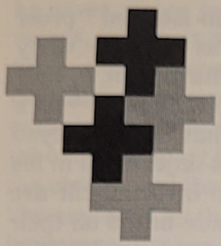
It must be admitted that should the full powers be granted the bishops to turn on or off the flow of money to projects according to whether they like or dislike them, it would give them power to control policies which make the church function. On the other hand, to keep the power to determine the projects to be financed in the actual control of other administrative officers, makes the bishopric a mere collection agency. The balance between the administrative and temporal functions of the church can thus be destroyed; and with that achieved, the confidence of the membership in the sound use of their funds be lost.

Just what justification exists to put $200,000 to $250,000 a year into Graceland College? This justification is particularly acute at the present time when some plans are contemplated for expanding the Graceland Campus to Independence. A careful assessment of the benefits to the major purposes for which our tithes are paid — the witnessing for Christ and conversion of men to become his disciples — is hard to discover among college students and alumni.

Perhaps a better case can be made for music and radio, but this expense also needs some fresh examination. I do not question that these are good, but how many are reached by them and, since a world church furnishes the money, is the cost justified by the results? The church was recently reminded of its obligation to repress "unnecessary wants" (147:5). There are many services and material things which are socially desirable, but will they fulfill the purposes of God in the Restoration Movement?

All these difficulties can be overcome, as the Lord has declared, "The works, and designs, and purposes of God cannot be frustrated" (D and C 2:1). Therefore I can see that we can expect his directing powers to show us the way out. If we give our people an assurance of divine leadership, and exhibit humble willingness to follow in his way, a glorious future awaits the church.

Chris B. Hartshorn of Independence, Missouri is a former editor of the Saints' Herald.



The Doctrine of the Church:

A Reply to Clifford Cole

Harold N. Schneebeck, Jr.

In the face of the awesome human needs which we see in the world it is a travesty to waste our resources in the attempt to convert members of the other great religions of the world — not to speak of wasting them in the attempt to convert our own fellow Christians.

Clifford Cole's paper on the doctrine of the church[1] is a helpful contribution to the current discussion concerning the nature of the church. It is particularly significant in its recognition that it is necessary to reexamine our notions of the nature and function of the church. Moreover, the paper's acceptance of a more sound historical concept of the RLDS Church's relationship to the New Testament church and the paper's advocacy of a more open attitude toward other Christian churches are important.

However, I believe that some of Cole's fundamental points are open to criticism. Cole contends that the mission of the church should not be seen in terms of direct involvement in secular political and social movements. The church's mission, he believes, is the more basic one of the spiritual regeneration of mankind. His first reason for this is his belief that the New Testament shows this to be the essence of the mission of Christ. He bases this contention primarily on the three temptations of Christ as recorded by Luke. By rejecting the temptations, Christ, Cole believes, refused to characterize his mission (and therefore the mission of the church as well) as one involving social reform and political involvement (pp. 12-13). It must be noted, however, that in many other places the New Testament characterizes the mission of Jesus as one of service to the poor and the exploited. Luke records that Jesus declared in the synagogue at Nazareth that he came to "proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." (Luke 4:18) Moreover, this is not simply an isolated "proof text." The New Testament indicates that both Jesus and the early Christian church saw their mission as messianic in nature. That is, they saw the mission of Jesus — and the church which followed him — as a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets' assertion that God is obeyed only by those who seek justice in society. Thus, Cole is unjustified in his suggestion that those who call the church to secular involvement are asking the church to take up their own personal crusade based on their own individual values. (p. 12) On the contrary, it is the Bible itself which demands that the church be involved in a search for justice in the secular affairs of the world. It is the Bible which says that God does not listen to the prayers or the songs of those who wink at the plight of the poor and the oppressed. (Amos 5:21-24)

Cole's analysis of the relationship of the church to the world is also problematic. Cole's paper evidences an undue and unjustifiable hesitance to see the life and mission of the church as focused on the secular world. He believes that to do so is to invite apostacy. (p. 12) Cole's suspicion of the secular world as the focus for the life of the church appears to be rooted in his understanding of God. He makes it quite clear that God is to be clearly distinguished from the world. ". . . the church does have a central mission, and it must not be sidetracked or diverted from it. That mission comes from God, not from the world" (p. 18). This understanding of God as separate from the world keeps Cole from developing an adequate statement of the mission of the church. Because he separates God from the world, he cannot relate the church to the world. In an attempt to express the mission of the church he lists eight "general and eternal functions of the church" (p. 14). Of these only three deal with the mission of the church to the world. Cole tells us that the church is to preserve the Gospel, preach the Gospel, and form the Kingdom of God on earth. (pp. 14-15) But he does not spell out what this means for us in our world. Cole contends that a re-interpretation of the concept of Zion will allow us to see the church's relationship to the world more adequately. He suggests that groups of church people organized into communities throughout the world can be effective "in significant ways in the world" (p. 18). However, he never stipulates what the function of these communities in the world might be. He does, however, make it clear that these communities must never be identified with the world or participate in secular movements in the world. The cause of Zion, however interpreted, can never be seen as involving participation in organized endeavors for social reform. (p. 18) The church must remain distinct from the world. Essentially the world appears as something foreign to the church's fundamental nature.

Cole's analysis of the meaning of evangelism is marked by the same tendency. He suggests at one point that the traditional view of evangelism as "getting people to be baptized" is inadequate. (p. 13) But he never states just what an adequate understanding of evangelism involves, telling us only that "The church must win men to Christ" (p. 14). Thus, Cole's paper makes very little headway in the attempt to understand more clearly what discipleship in our world means. Seen in its entirety Cole's paper suggests that the church is a fellowship whose life takes shape apart from the world. A fundamental hostility exists between the church and the world so that the church must be aware lest it should "be captured by the world" (p. 12). Thus, the church's mission becomes fundamentally one of calling men and women out of the world and into the presence of God through the church. "It is the purpose of the church to bring persons into the presence of God through the sacraments and ordinances of the church" (p. 14). It is because of the limitations of this frame of reference that Cole fails to suggest how we can move beyond the traditional concept of evangelism as getting people to join the church.

If we are ever to have an adequate understanding of the church's relationship to the world and the meaning of Christian discipleship in the world, we must, ultimately, clarify what we mean when we talk about God. Without an adequate understanding of what kind of reality we see the word "God" as pointing to and how we understand the relationship of that reality to the world, we will never have an adequate understanding of the church. If we have learned anything from the discussion about the doctrine of the church which has taken place among serious theologians in recent years, it is that a proper understanding of the church is impossible outside an adequate theological context. That is, if we are to understand what the church is and what it should be about in this world, we must first get straight for ourselves what it means to talk about God as the ground of our Christian faith. In recent years we have seen more clearly that ". . . the problem of God is not one problem among several others; it is the only problem there is."[2]

The question of God is so important because the way we deal with it necessarily has decisive methodological implications for the way we proceed to talk about the church. Traditionally Christians have viewed God as a reality "above" or separate from the sensory world. This traditional view of God developed through the work of early Christian theologians who tried to make Christianity understandable in terms of Greek philosophy, especially Neoplatonism. God was thus equated with the Neoplatonic Absolute. He was understood to be infinite, eternal, absolute, and impassible. He could not be directly involved in the imperfect, finite world of time and had to be viewed as completely separate from the sensory world. God's dealings with the world had to take place through mediators. Christ (understood in terms of the Neoplatonic *Nous*) and the church he established were the mediators between God and the world. Thus, this view of God is the basis of the belief that the church cannot be primarily concerned with the world. The church is viewed as a mediatorial community which exists apart from the world and mediates

God to the world. This understanding has been very prevalent in the RLDS church. We have seen the church as the focus of God's presence in the world. We have understood the mission of the church as the attempt to bring all men within the fellowship of the church so that they can come into the presence of God through the worship and sacraments of the church. This view is also reflected in our belief that the church must be protected from apostacy. If the church ceases to exist in its authentic form, God is not properly mediated to man. Thus, we have viewed long periods as spiritual "Dark Ages" when men could not have an adequate understanding of God.

But that notion of God and his relationship to the world is no longer adequate and consequently the traditional notion of the church as a mediator of God to the world is inadequate. In the first place, the Bible does not portray God as essentially separate from the world. It was Greek philosophy which led to the view that God was a reality apart from the world.[3] The whole of the New Testament testifies to the incarnation of God in this world. The Bible affirms that Jesus was not just a mediator between man and God, but was God himself. The Christian church has always affirmed that the life of a man who was fully human and shared our human experience in every way was the ultimate revelation of God. Thus, God does not remove us from the secular world of human experience. Rather he comes to us through the world and we encounter him in our secular experience. The incarnation affirms that God does not have to be mediated to man through a church. God encounters man and reveals himself to man directly in the world. The Christian church did not originate as a group of people who had grasped a "spiritual" revelation which they were called to mediate to the world. (In the church's struggle against agnosticism this notion was decisively rejected.) Rather the church was from the first a fellowship of people who had encountered God in the world in the life of the man Jesus. From the very beginning the church drew its life from the presence of God in the world. Thus, the doctrine of the incarnation affirms the ultimate significance of the secular world for the life of the church. We cannot view the church as a spiritual fellowship which exists apart from secular concerns. If we are true to the Bible, we must affirm the ultimate significance of secular concerns. In reality the incarnation breaks down the barrier between "secular" and "sacred."

Moreover, in the modern world it has become impossible to accept the traditional notion of God as something essentially separate from our daily existence in the world. The supernatural God of traditional theism is really untenable in our world. This is not to say that we are "secularistic" or "atheistic." It is to say that we must affirm the significance of our lives here and now and discover in this world the reality to which we refer when we say "God."[4] We confess that we encounter in our lives meaning and purpose which does not have to be mediated to us by the church, but which is not of our own creation either. We encounter God in the world, as Paul Tillich said, as the depth and ground of our existence, as that which grasps us from within our experience in this world and concerns us ultimately.[5] We speak of God ". . . to refer to the objective ground in reality itself of our ineradicable confidence in the final worth of our existence."[6]

Since God is present in our world, it is unnecessary and improper to contend that the church should remain separate from the world and avoid involvement in secular affairs. The Christian church takes shape around the incarnation of God in this world and must therefore be a fellowship oriented toward the world. We need not fear that involvement in the secular affairs of the world will lead us away from God, for the world itself is the locus of God's concern and activity. Secular concern in the church is not a denial of God but an affirmation of faith in the God who is the ground of our worldly existence.

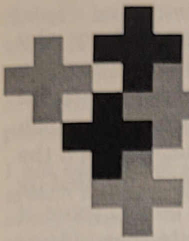
Moreover, since we believe in a God whom we encounter in this world, we cannot see the mission of the church as a "spiritual" mission designed to call men out of the world and into the church. To affirm that God took upon himself our human nature and experience is to affirm the ultimate significance of that human nature and experience. The mission of the church must therefore take shape around a concern for human values. Just as Jesus Christ affirmed that he came "to set at liberty those who are oppressed," (Lk 4:18) our mission as a church must be to fight against war, injustice, hunger and all those things which negate the ultimate value of human life. The church is called to solidarity with the unloved, the poor, and the oppressed. Moreover, the mission of the church is not limited to the search for social justice. Since God is essentially that reality which gives our lives meaning, purpose and "depth", all those human pursuits which seek to explore and expand our awareness of the meaning and purpose of our human life and experience are part of the legitimate mission of the church. Thus, the church should be committed to education — not because it makes men Christians, but because it makes men more sensitive human beings. The church should encourage and support, as an integral part of its mission, active engagement in music, the arts, literature, science, philosophy, history and all those endeavors which explore, analyze and express the meaning of human life.

Finally, our belief in an incarnate God, a God present in this world necessitates a re-evaluation of the nature of our mission in relationship to other religions. The time has come for us to recognize that God's saving presence is at work in other religions besides Christianity. This is not to say that all the great religions of the world are essentially the same. It is only to confess with humility that our understanding of God and his purpose for man does not exhaust the reality of God's presence in the world. We should accept humbly God's ability to make himself known to other people and other cultures in other ways than our own. We should recognize that in many cases we do more harm than good when we separate a person from his cultural and religious heritage by converting him to Christianity. Could Martin Buber or Mahatma Gandhi have borne witness to the reality of God any more effectively as Christians? The time has come for us to pursue seriously our Christian mission to the hungry, the oppressed and the unloved of this world. In the face of the awesome human needs which we see in the world it is a travesty to waste our resources in the attempt to convert members of the other great religions of the world — not to speak of wasting them in the attempt to convert our own fellow Christians.[7]

---

1. Clifford A. Cole, "The Doctrine of the Church," **University Bulletin XX** (Winter, 1968), pp. 11-19,40.
2. Schubert M. Ogden, **The Reality of God and Other Essays** (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 1.
3. I am not arguing that it was a mistake for early Christian theologians to explain Christian faith in terms of philosophy. As long as theologians use language and ideas, they will necessarily be involved in a philosophic enterprise of some sort. Christian faith can only be articulated meaningfully by being related to philosophy. I am merely suggesting that we do not need to be bound to a previous synthesis of theology and philosophy, however brilliant. Today we can perhaps best articulate a Christian theology by relating it to existentialism (Tillich), process philosophy (Charles Hartshorne, Daniel Day Williams, Shubert Ogden), or even linguistic philosophy (Ian Ramsey, Basil Mitchell, R. M. Hare). All of these offer ways of dealing with the problem of God which see the reality of God within rather than above the world.
4. Ogden, p. 20.
5. Paul Tillich, **The Shaking of the Foundations** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 57.
6. Ogden, p. 37.
7. John Macquarrie, **Principles of Christian Theology** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 394-395. I am much indebted to Dr. Macquarrie who has long been an eloquent advocate of a more open attitude on the part of Christians toward the other major religions of the world.

Harold N. Schneebeck, Jr. is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Iowa.



On Church-relatedness and the Purposes of Graceland College

William T. Higdon

The educational task of the church college is not to teach the sacred and the secular but to make the secular sacred by imparting meaning to the facts and ideas of the world around us.

A reevaluation and a clear statement of the purposes served by an institution is a continuing task. Such a reevaluation is particularly important at this juncture in the life of Graceland College when the college is fashioning its long range plan, when the church is studying its educational program and the best deployment of its scarce resources, and when serious challenges to the validity of church relatedness, legally, constitutionally, philosophically and practically are being advanced from many, often sympathetic quarters.

In this essay, I shall attempt to advance some thoughts on the character of Graceland's church relatedness showing how this relationship enters into the consideration of the purposes of the institution and becomes either central or peripheral in the sense of institutional identity. From such understandings, I am hopeful that the central thrusts of the institution can be clarified and, as a result, more consequential programs and policies can be devised, the allocation of resources can follow assessments of priorities among programs and policies, and finally, all of the members of the college community can direct their energies more efficiently into the common endeavor. Such clarification, if it can be accomplished, will help meet the specific criticisms and the general sense of uneasiness about the substance of the claims of church relatedness by the college. In addition, we may find in a clearly understood purpose and in the programs fulfilling the purpose, an exciting basis on which the resources needed by the programs can be accumulated.

Graceland has been described as "the church's college." Many who have led, and loved, and built the college have understood that it took its primary sense of identity from its church relatedness. Others have found in this same source a stifling cloud; a source of schizophrenia in which the institution was torn asunder in the heart of its purposes between the conflicting forces of its aspiration to be a college (in all that is implied by the term) and its church heritage which called it into being, gave it nurture and influenced its destiny. Before we can reconcile these views within the purposes of the college, we must look at the church, for it is in understanding the church that we begin to understand the purposes of Graceland as it relates to the church.

While it is patently impossible to completely describe the church and its purposes in a few statements, it is obvious that some attention must be given to the life, thought and purposes of the church if criticisms such as Harvey Cox's are to be refuted. He claims, "No one of the so-called Christian colleges that now dot our Midwest is able to give a very plausible theological basis for retaining the equivocal phrase *Christian College* in the catalog . . . there are no theological reasons. The idea of developing Christian Universities in America was bankrupt even before it began." These criticisms of church relatedness in colleges have great force in a concept of "church" which implies an institution or community which has obtained, by revelation from God, a body of true doctrine and which conceives as its purpose the proclamation of that truth and the worship of God from which it came. Even here, however, criticisms such as Cox's are not completely devastating if the proclamation of the church's truth is seen in Kierkegaard's quote from Luther:

> But it is true that sermons should not be preached in churches. It harms Christianity in a high degree and alters its very nature, that it is brought in an artistic remoteness from reality, instead of being heard in the midst of real life . . . So then sermons should not be preached in churches but in the streets in the midst of life, of the reality of daily life, weekday life.

From the Kierkegaardian insight a college may well claim genuine, fundamental relatedness to the purposes of the church, and therefore, lay claims on it for support, if the college can help its students understand their "daily life, weekday life" in terms of the revelations that God has vouchsafed to man in all the ways that He has revealed Himself. In many ways, the cry for relevance by modern college students and their disillusionment with the learning available in today's institutions of higher learning stems from the void left by those institutions when more "objective" cognitive knowledge is favored above the issues of personal identity and personal worth.

A commonality of purpose between the college and the church in terms of fundamentally religious concerns in the development of human beings may not demand close institutional relationships between church and college beyond coordination of tasks for efficiency. However, Bob

Speaks has pointed out a broader understanding of the processes of the church — how religious truth is revealed and proclaimed — and if his view is essentially correct, then the college may be an important, if not a crucially vital, institutional means for the accomplishment of the purposes of the church. Speaks writes:

> I am suggesting something more radical still, namely, that it is not enough to preach sermons in the streets as if the church were carrying the gospel into an area foreign to it. No the text, even the very substance and truth of the 'sermon' should be derived as much from life as it is experienced in the streets, as from that special testimony which is the church's treasure.

While it is certainly true that Reorganized Latter Day Saints have understood their revealing and proclaiming tasks much more narrowly than Speaks, many fundamental points of belief and doctrine suggest that the purpose and promise of Latter Day Saintism can be viewed validly in these broad terms. A few of these can be cited in support:

1. The belief in continuing revelation, as a diffusive as well as plenary function, can break the binding hold of closed scripture on the mind and thought of RLDS Christians.

2. The belief in divine call of priesthood from all walks of life means that life shapes church thought because these men who have been called are shaped and molded as much from life as from knowledge and training gained by education in the heritage of the church and scholarly understanding of Christian doctrine. The belief in divine call gives these men special standing in the minds of faithful members concerning direct insights into the applications of principles of the Christian gospel in the present culture not found in other modes of selection of ministerial leadership.

3. In symbolic language, but in very real doctrinal terms, the Latter Day Saint conception of "the body and spirit are the soul of man" destroys the arbitrary dichotomy established by early Christian philosophers in which secular and sacred aspects of man's life were considered separate entities. Such a unified understanding permits the church's college to see its role not only in the teaching of the sacred and the secular, but also in making the secular sacred by imparting meaning to the facts and ideas of the world around us.

4. An additional point of seminal significance supporting Speaks' view of the role of the church is the understanding of the revelatory process extant in Latter Day Saint scripture. This point, embodied in the quotation from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me; but, behold I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right . . ." suggests a much more active role by the human mind in the revelatory process than is commonly supposed, even by Latter Day Saints. By this understanding of revelation, a well-disciplined, perceptive mind, well

attuned to the current state of man, would be a requisite to valid revelation from God. The prophet by this view is not a blank page on which words or even ideas of God are inscribed as a result of some transcendent experience in which the prophet plays a passive role.

The foregoing four points in support of Speaks' position are neither exhaustive nor are they well understood in terms of all of their subtle implications. They do, however, support the notion that the collegiate functions of refining the mind and spirit of man, even in so-called secular areas of study, are necessary to the church if it is to accomplish its central purposes. We may perhaps conclude that if a church has an understanding of its mission and function implied in Speaks' statement and supporting observations and did not have provisions for the collegiate functions it would immediately begin to devise means to accomplish these in the total spectrum of its program.

Graceland's Tasks

If Speaks' view of the task of the church is accepted, the more open question is not whether a collegiate institution can or should relate to the church but how can a college best articulate the total functions of the church. This question can and should be the subject of continuing dialogue between the church and college.

There is much to be said for a "melting pot" notion of a college accommodating in an institutional form the collegiate functions of the church. Such a notion is based on the widely accepted observation that the colleges contain the most revolutionizing ferment in the world today. Recognition of this fact demands that the church must be a part of the college scene promoting, modifying or obstructing the revolutionizing process, depending on its insight relative to the content of the particular revolution. Such a "melting pot" or "marketplace" model for institutions of higher learning is widely accepted and depends on a natural selection of ideas in which the best ideas survive in the competitive arena of intellectual controversy.

While the church cannot ignore the revolutionizing character of contemporary colleges, there is no logical necessity that demands church sponsorship of a contemporary college except for two related, secondary considerations:

1. By sponsoring the college and its so-called "secular" learning the church has a larger measure of influence in the lives of young adults who accept college attendance as an integral step in their personal development. Influences in the direction of the church and its mission at this critical juncture in the lives of young people are more easily accomplished if the church's young people attend its college. Such an institution can serve as an intellectual "compression chamber" for young people reared in very sheltered and/or culturally isolated homes of church members.

2. If the church relies entirely on ministering to and through the

public institutions of higher learning, whose interests ignore those of the church except in accidental ways, the church is relegated to the periphery of the action. A common complaint among campus ministers at public institutions is the feeling of impotence with regard to both the young people and the institution because they are not organically related to either.

A college related to the church and its mission should fashion the most appropriate model it can with which it can give substance to its church relatedness. Perhaps a better model for the church related college is as a company of scholars with a commitment to a cause larger than themselves. A better metaphor is to see such a company on a road whose end is not in sight but the company is motivated by a faith in themselves and that their direction is toward positive actions.

Such a company would not be free of argument and controversy but would see a pooling of data, mind and perspective for an enlarged and more universal understanding of a problem, or an institutionalization of "studying it out in your own mind." The company would, however, by their common commitment to the mission of the church, be free to receive intuitive-divine validation of the fruits of their study. Such an ephemeral way of validating the results of intellectual inquiry would obviously come only after all other tests, pragmatic, logical, and empirical, were appropriately applied. This final test is the irreducible "trusting in that spirit that leads to do good" that is a crucial proposition of the Christian gospel.

The uncertainties about what is "good" are well known and consequently the acceptance of a "good" is based on the intellectual tests and, finally, on the general understanding that today's "good" may be supplanted by tomorrow's "better" without diminishing the persuasiveness of today's "good."

A cardinal feature of such a company willing to discover and declare "goods" is that they become actors in the culture rather than observers and critics of it. In such a college, the faculty and students would talk about things and issues and not talk about the talk of things. Discourse in a course in ethics would be unashamedly about good and evil and not on analysis of when and why people might say that something is "good" or "evil," or when an action might be "right" or "wrong." Rather than pretending or attempting to adopt objective positions that are neither possible or if possible, not helpful, faculty-student intellectual positions would be open and declared.

Dealing with a learning situation in such an institution, the teacher and student would confront the substantial religious issues in a real struggle with them rather than withdrawing into a *meta* position of talking about what would be done in a real struggle with the issues. The teacher and students would expect to learn as much or more of "truth" from the struggle as from learning bodies of "truth" derived from analysis of other struggles.

The status of student *vis a vis*, the teacher and others would be vitally changed in subtle but powerful ways. Students would be viewed as new recruits into the intellectual struggle, junior colleagues, supported and understood to have less experience and less expertness but nevertheless not a separate class of persons — recipients of the attention of the intellectual fraternity.

With such a model as an institutional form for the collegiate functions of the church, vital purposes can be served for both church and college in their relatedness. By its own processes, the college serves the purposes of the church through its students by bringing them to grips with the real, workday life as it disciplines and sharpens their mental faculties. By sensitizing these same persons to the movement and purposes of God in the life of man, the best climate is established for the revelation of God in man if the Latter Day Saint perception of the revelatory process is accurate.

There is yet another aspect of the relationship to be considered: i.e. the relationship made possible between two persons (institutions) by the mutual involvement with a third person (institution) or cause to which they both are totally committed. The church and the college are thus involved in a way in which neither can be complete, nor can the arenas they represent be mutually compatible, without the other and their involvement with the third (the student). Even more, each must respond to the other in such a way that their mutual involvement with the third acts to give substance to their relationship; a relationship which places the call to be human (the divine mission) at a level of intellectual and emotional consideration. Such consideration allows the student to find himself involved in an active search for the force which has drawn these two institutions into such a concern for him. This search does not necessarily reveal to him answers, nor make pronouncements, as is so much the nature of the secular (non-confronted) institutions. Instead, it makes the student a participant in a dramatic representation of man's use of his mind and heart to discover meaning outside of himself. He draws from this participation not so much proof as position, yet not so much position as involvement. Without this sense of participation much of the joy of the discovery — an essential in the very nature of discovery — is lost in the secular assumption that there is no way to go beyond the truth of the marketplace.

In Summary

The notion advanced in this essay is that in its basic revelatory purposes the church will require what are currently understood to be collegiate functions. However these functions are institutionalized, the disciplined mind engaged perceptively in the real, workday world supplies the only proper basis for the disclosure of God to and in man. Without these functions religions, and possibly even God, become remote

from man and do not seriously intervene in man's history — in his individual or collective history. Similarly, intellectualisms in seeking objective, carefully defined positions withdraw from the real divine concerns of man into a *meta* state of talking about how you talk about such concerns. The basic religious realities of life advanced by the church can serve as the greater cause which gives purpose to the exercise of reason and thereby extricates reason from the unreal world of games and pastimes.

If these ideas are valid, the relatedness of church and college, while often experienced in abrasive terms, is vital to the life of both. The categories of religious purpose — discerning, proclaiming and participating — differ from the categories of collegiate purposes of research, teaching and service only in inflection. The melding of the two inflections through institutional relationship — organic more importantly than legal — aids each institution to contribute in relevant terms to the life of man.

William T. Higdon is President of Graceland College.

The "Book of Abraham" in the Light of History and Egyptology

Richard P. Howard

We need a viable interpretation of the Book of Abraham *which not only sustains its integrity, but also purges its sense of history.*

Two widely divergent streams of events have focused public attention on the *Book of Abraham,* written by Joseph Smith, Jr. between 1835 and 1842, and published by him in the periodical of which he was editor at Nauvoo, Illinois in March 1842.[1] The first of these events was related to the discovery and publication, in 1967, of fragments of the original papyri from which Joseph Smith produced *Book of Abraham.* The second centers in the Civil Rights Movement involving the future of the black citizenry of the United States. Since it is the *Book of Abraham* which substantiates the Utah Mormon Church's denial of priesthood status to its black members, (see Abraham 1:26) this book naturally comes into focus. One readily recalls the controversy between the Brigham Young University and Stanford University in 1969 in which black athletes refused to compete with BYU teams as long as the Mormon church's position of denying priesthood to its black membership prevailed. The Reorganized Church feels something of the ripples of the turbulance, since Joseph Smith, Jr., Latter Day Saintism's founder, wrote the *Book of Abraham* and since many of our early RLDS leaders considered that work to be inspired writing, or at the very least, an authentic translation of the writings of that ancient patriarch, Abraham.

The convergence of these events compels a serious attempt to deal honestly with the phenomenon of Joseph Smith, Jr. "translating" those ancient Egyptian documents which since have had such far reaching consequences. This is not an easy task since the deep faith and strong feelings of many people have been involved in the interpretations offered thus far. This is all the more reason however, to attempt an objective survey with the hope of encouraging interested readers to free themselves from conceptions about the *Book of Abraham* not authentically founded in reliable documentation.

Acquisition and Early Appraisal of the Egyptian Papyri

On or about July 6, 1835, Joseph Smith and/or other unspecified church leaders at Kirtland, Ohio, spent somewhere between $2400 and $6000 for a collection of four ancient Egyptian mummies and accompanying papyri, presented to them by one Michael H. Chandler. According to Oliver Cowdery, writing in Kirtland in December of that year, Chandler had inherited these relics from his uncle Antonio Lebolo, French explorer who died in 1832 in Trieste with these in his possession. Lebolo had discovered these artifacts in June 1831 near the city of Thebes, about one hundred miles north of the present site of the Aswan Dam, along the Nile River. Lebolo's will awarded these mummies and papyri to his nephew, Michael Chandler, then presumed to be living in Ireland. The shipment arrived in Dublin, but was forwarded by Chandler's friends to New York City. Chandler, then living in Philadelphia, came to New York, paid the tariff and assumed ownership in April 1833.[2]

When Chandler opened the eleven mummies, he discovered with several of them, rolls of papyri with curious pictures and inscriptions. Cowdery states that even while still at the New York Customs House, Chandler was informed that one Joseph Smith might be able to decipher the Egyptian language on the papyri. Before attempting to find Joseph Smith, however, he returned to Philadelphia and began to exhibit the mummies and papyri at the Philadelphia Arcade, charging admission to the public. Apparently Chandler was planning to travel around the country exhibiting his collection, so he secured an authenticating certificate over the inscriptions of several prominent Philadelphia "scientific" men:

> Having examined with considerable attention and deep interest, a number of mummies from the Catacombs, near Thebes, in Egypt, and now exhibiting in the Arcade, we beg leave to recommend them to the observation of the curious inquirer on subjects of a period so long elapsed; probably not less than three thousand years ago. The features of some of these Mummies are in perfect expression. The papyrus, covered with black or red ink, or paint, in excellent preservation, are very interesting. The undersigned, unsolicited by any person connected by interest with this exhibition, have voluntarily set their names hereunto, for the simple purpose of calling the attention of the public, to an interesting collection, not sufficiently known in this city.
>
> John Redman Coxe, M. D.
> Richard Harlan, M. D.
> W. J. Pancoast, M. D.
>
> William P. C. Barton, M.D.
> E. F. Rivinus, M.D.
> Samuel G. Morgan, M.D.[3]

Appended to the above certificate was an added attestation, sponsored by W. E. Horner, M. D., as follows:

> I concur in the above sentiments, concerning the collection of Mummies in the Philadelphia Arcade, and consider them highly deserving the attention of the curious.[4]

Cowdery apparently was greatly impressed by these certificates since he published them in his article. He also informs us that Chandler searched Philadelphia for someone who could translate the Egyptian language symbols on the papyri. From "some few men of the first eminence, he obtained in a small degree, the translation of a few characters."[5] Evidently Chandler informed the Kirtland saints that during his travels he had been repeatedly referred to Joseph Smith, Jr., of whom Chandler previously had never heard, before gaining possession of Lebolo's Egyptian treasure. Early in July Chandler arrived at Kirtland, having traveled nearly two years exhibiting his Egyptian collection.

Continuing his statement, Cowdery noted that as soon as Mr. Chandler showed his mummies and records to Joseph Smith, the latter showed Mr. Chandler "a number of characters like those upon the writings of Mr. C. which were previously copied from the plates, containing the history of the Nephites, or book of Mormon." (This was presumably a reference to the now famous "Anthon Transcript".) Then Mr. Chandler solicited Joseph Smith's aid in deciphering a few of the curious inscriptions and allowed Cowdery to copy a few of the symbols for Joseph Smith to "translate." And Cowdery infers that Joseph Smith indicated that there would be no trouble in doing so.[6] With little loss of time Joseph Smith retired to his quarters and returned soon with a "translation" which apparently satisfied Chandler, who in fact was so pleased that he wrote out and delivered to Joseph the following certificate:

> Kirtland, July 6th, 1835
>
> This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr. in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters, in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, shown to the most learned: And, from the information that I could even learn, or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr. to correspond in the most minute matters.
>
> (signed) Michael H. Chandler
> Traveling with, and proprietor of Egyptian
> Mummies.[7]

Cowdery was very clear in stating that the above certificate was issued prior to the sale of the mummies and papyri to the church people at Kirtland. Significant also is Cowdery's statement that Chandler informed the saints that unless he could soon find someone who could translate the inscriptions on the papyri, he would take them to London. Such a statement on the part of Chandler could conceivably have stimulated Joseph Smith's interest in trying his hand immediately at "translating" a few characters; the resulting interpretations by Smith apparently satisfied Chandler and the transaction was made.[8]

Joseph Smith immediately began working with the papyri, aided by Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps as scribes. That they were deeply touched and greatly excited in their initial appraisal is shown by Cowdery's December 1835 statement that on the papyri were in fact the writings of Abraham and Joseph. Cowdery proceeds to explain that

> The language in which this record is written is very comprehensive, and many of the hieroglyphics exceedingly striking. The evidence is apparent upon the face, that they were written by persons acquainted with the history of the creation, the fall of man, and more or less of the correct ideas of notions of the Deity. The representation of the god-head--three, yet in one, is curiously drawn to give simply, though impressively, the writer's views of that exalted personage. The serpent, represented as walking, or formed in a manner to be able to walk, standing in front of, and near a female figure, is to me, one of the greatest representations I have ever seen upon paper, or a writing substance; and must go so far towards convincing the rational mind of the correctness and divine authority of the holy scriptures, and especially that part which has ever been assailed by the infidel community, as being a fiction, as to carry away, with one mighty sweep, the whole atheistical fabric, without leaving a vestage (sic) sufficient for a foundation stone.[9]

Reference to any of the recent publications of these recently discovered papyri will reward the reader with a view of some of the drawings which so dramatically caught the first attentions of Smith and Cowdery and brought forth the foregoing lines. These early appraisals in the closing months of 1835 suggest that part of the papyri were considered to have been written by Joseph, son of Jacob. Of the two rolls, Cowdery stated that this one, by that ancient patriarch,

> presents a representation of the judgment: At one view you behold the Savior seated upon his throne, crowned, and holding the sceptres of righteousness and power, before whom also are assembled the twelve tribes of Israel, the nations, languages and tongues of the earth, the kingdoms of the world over which satan is represented as reigning, Michael the archangel, holding the key of the bottomless pit, and at the same time the devil as being chained and shut up in the bottomless pit. But upon this last scene, I am able only to give you a **shadow**, to the real picture. I am certain it cannot be viewed without filling the mind with awe, unless the mind is far estranged from God . . .[10]

Cowdery indicated that he could have continued his narrative and testimony at great length, but instead closed with a brief affirmation showing the depth of the feelings of all concerned pertaining to the newly acquired ancient records. He stated:

> When the translation of these valuable documents will be completed, I am unable to say; neither can I give you a probable idea how large volumes they will make; but judging from their size, and the comprehensiveness of the language, one might reasonably expect to see a sufficient (sic) to develop much upon the mighty acts of the ancient men of God, and of his dealing with the children of men when they saw him face to face. Be there little or much, it must be an inestimable acquisition to our present scriptures, fulfilling, in a small degree, the word of the prophet: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea . . .

> If Providence permits, I will, ere long, write you again upon the propriety of looking for additions to our present scriptures, according to their own literal reading.

John Whitmer added his testimony on this subject, presumably at a time fairly soon after the acquisition of the materials from Chandler, and certainly during the early period during which Joseph Smith was working out of his initial interpretations. He stated:

> Joseph the Seer saw these records and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records which gave an account of our forefathers. Much of which was written by Joseph of Egypt who was sold by his brethren. Which when all translated will be a pleasing history and of great value to the Saints.[12]

There was certainly no way for anyone to check the accuracy of Joseph Smith's 1835 "translations" since Egyptology as an exact science was only in its infancy and was limited to scholars on the European side of the Atlantic. And, if one had faith in the authenticity of Joseph Smith's "translations," he only could surmise that they were true, and true by the "power of God" or, as Whitmer affirmed, by the "revelation of Jesus Christ." Whitmer's enthusiasm was concurred by Joseph Smith himself in the very early work he had begun on the papyri:

> I . . . commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc., — a more full account of which will appear in their place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth.[13]

Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar

The great French pioneer of Egyptology, Jean Francois Champollion, died in 1832, nearly a decade before his Egyptian grammar and dictionary was published in Europe. It is generally conceded that the science of Egyptology was not sufficiently advanced during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr. to have helped him in his work of "translating" the *Book of Abraham*. Faced with this lack of Egyptian philological resources, Joseph Smith sought to supply this deficiency, and gives us, in a brief entry in his personal history, an indication of how and when he proceeded to do it:

> The remainder of this month (July 1835), I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients.[14]

The next entry in Joseph Smith's History relative to his work on this Egyptian alphabet and grammar is under the date of October 1, 1835. It is apparent from the entry that Joseph Smith felt he was dealing with documents reflective of the life and times of Abraham:

> This afternoon, I laboured on the Egyptian Alphabet, in company with brothers O. Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, and during the research, the principles of astronomy, as understood by father Abraham and the ancients, unfolded to our understanding, the particulars of which will appear hereafter.[15]

A significant development paralleling his work on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar was Joseph Smith's decision to begin the study of Hebrew. He commissioned Cowdery to purchase the best books he could find in New York to help them in the study and the books were in hand at Kirtland by November 20. The services of Dr. Daniel Peixotto, Hebrew scholar at nearby Willoughby College, were contracted for, but by January 1836 it was apparent that Peixotto would not be able to fulfill his obligations. Consequently, Dr. Joshua Seixas of Hudson Seminary was engaged for a seven week term and in late January began instructing a class of the church leaders in the Kirtland Temple. But Joseph Smith had studied the Hebrew alphabet and grammar with great zeal from November 21 until the formal classes began, and had called his associates together on numerous occasions for study and discussions of the Hebrew alphabet and language.

Mention of Joseph Smith's Hebrew studies is made because when a photocopy of the original Joseph Smith *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* was published in 1966, it then became possible for students of both Egyptology and Hebrew to focus attention on its content. This has been done, of course, with specific reference to the language of the *Book of Abraham*, and it has been observed by Hebrew scholars that many of the proper names in the *Book of Abraham* are either Hebrew or Hebrew related.[16]

The publication of Joseph Smith's original *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* by the Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1966 is significant from another standpoint too. Not only do the pages of this document reveal Joseph Smith's unique system for approaching the study of the Egyptian language, but more importantly, a sizable portion of the early part of the *Book of Abraham* text itself appears there as well. A quick glance at any of the pages containing *Book of Abraham* texts discloses the *modus operandi* of Joseph Smith in determining its content. For example, each page containing *Book of Abraham* texts was divided into two parts. A very narrow column on the left side of the page shows several handdrawn Egyptian symbols, presumably from the papyri. To the right of each symbol was recorded the portion of the *Book of Abraham* text suggested to Joseph Smith by that particular symbol. Even with no knowledge of Egyptology and without reference to the original papyri, one might wish to question the basis upon which a single Egyptian symbol would be translated into fifty or more English words, including a generous sprinkling of Hebrew proper names. But fortunately an event of tremendous importance in 1967 has given us the key to an authentic appraisal of the process by which the *Book of Abraham* text was formulated by Joseph Smith.

The Discovery and Publication of the Original Papyri in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art

For many years the whereabouts of the original papyri had been a matter of some concern and speculation. In 1898, Joseph Smith III, son of the Martyr and then president of the Reorganized Church at Lamoni, Iowa, seemed to have settled the issue in a letter to the RLDS church Historian, Heman C. Smith:

> . . . She (Lucy Mack Smith, mother of Joseph Smith, Jr.) took them from our house, some time after Father's death, and had them at her daughter Lucy Millikin's, when they moved into Knox County, Illinois, not far from Galesburg. I cannot give you dates, but during a part of 1846-47 Mother and family were away from Nauvoo and Grandmother was at Lucy Millikin's. Grandmother finally came back to Nauvoo with Lucy's family, but came without the mummies and case of drawers. We learned that while living near Galesburg, Uncle William undertook a lecturing tour, and secured the mummies and case of records, as the papyrus was called, as an exhibit and aid to making his lectures more attractive and lucrative. Uncle William became stranded somewhere along the Illinois River, and sold the mummies and the records with the understanding that he might repurchase them. This he never did. Part of the stock, one case of mummies and part or all of the case of drawers, found their way to Wood's Museum, Chicago, and a part to St. Louis, where, we never learned.
>
> I personally, in company with Elder Elijah Banta, of Sandwich, Illinois, saw the mummies and case of drawers in the museum in Chicago, before the great fire, in 1871; in which they undoubtedly perished with the rest of the accumulated relics and curiosities... Uncle William never accounted for the sale he made, except to state that he was obliged to sell them, but fully intended to repurchase them, but was never able, before the fire; and of course could not after they were burned.
>
> So far as anything is known by us about the fate, or final disposition of the papyrus, the foregoing is correct, and I was knowing to the facts as they occurred; and saw the mummies and case of drawers in Wood's Museum, Chicago, not long before the fire of October 1871 . . . .[17]

A puzzling aspect of this account is that forty-two years earlier, the signature of Joseph Smith III was affixed to a certificate of sale of the four mummies and the records associated with them. The full text of the certificate is reproduced here; the original certificate was found along with the Joseph Smith papyri in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 1967, and is presently housed in the office of the Church Historian, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

> Nauvoo City May 26/56
>
> This certifies that we have sold to Mr. A. Combs four Egyptian Mummies with the records of them. This Mummies were obtained from the catacoms (sic) of Egypt sixty feet below the surface of the Earth, by the antiquarian society of Paris and forwarded to New York and purchased by the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith at the price of twenty four hundred dollars in the year Eighteen hundred thirty-five, they were highly prized by Mr. Smith on account of the importance which attached to the record which were accidentaly (sic) found enclosed in the breast of one of the Mummies. from translations by Mr. Smith of the Records these Mummies were found to be the family of Pharo (sic) King of Egypt. they were kept exclusively by Mr. Smith until his death and since by the Mother of Mr. Smith notwithstanding we have had repeated offers to purchase which have invariably been refused until her death which occured (sic) on the fourteenth day of May last this month.

Nauvoo
Hancock Co. Ills. May 26
/s/ L. C. Bidamon
/s/ Emma Bidamon former wife of Jos. Smith
/s / Joseph Smith Son of Jos. Smith

There is no ready explanation for the discrepancy between the above certificate and the explanation offered by Joseph Smith III forty-two years later, cited above. One might speculate that in 1856 Joseph Smith III might have been, of the three persons signing the certificate, the least interested in the transaction and could have forgotten about the whole matter in the span of forty-two years. It may well be that Mr. A. Combs at one time lent the Egyptian mummies and papyri to the Wood Museum in Chicago for temporary exhibit, but reclaimed them before the great Chicago fire. And it may also be that, unknown to Joseph Smith III, Uncle William Smith might have found a way to repurchase the mummies and return them to his mother at Nauvoo. At any rate, the discovery of the certificate of sale together with the papyri is a major factor in verifying the authenticity of the papyri discovered.

Other authenticating evidences include the backing materials to which the papyri apparently were originally (1835) glued in order to keep them from falling apart. Two excellent photographs of this backing material were published two years ago and are revealed to be township maps of the counties including the Kirtland-Mentor area.[18]

But the most convincing evidence that the papyri found in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art are from the very ones used by Joseph Smith in his *Book of Abraham* production is the indisputable relationship existing between the papyri and the materials produced by Joseph Smith. There are two categories here:

1. In publishing the *Book of Abraham* in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842, Joseph Smith reproduced three drawings from the papyri. Nearly all of two of these three drawings in the original papyri were found among them in the Metropolitan Museum in 1967. The interested reader can study photocopies of these eleven papyri fragments with ease, since they have been reproduced in at least three different journals.[19] There can be no doubt that Facsimile No. 1 and Facsimile No. 3, as published in the *Book of Abraham* by Joseph Smith in 1842 (and continued by the Mormon Church in the *Book of Abraham* down through the years) were copied from drawings on the papyri fragments found in the Metropolitan Museum in 1967.

2. In noting previously the format of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar produced by Joseph Smith in 1835-36, it was observed that down the left side of each page containing the text proper, appears a column containing several Egyptian symbols, presumably copied from the papyri. Since the publication in 1966 of the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar of Joseph Smith and the discovery the next year of the original papyri with which Joseph Smith worked, there is no need for presumption

any longer. It has been determined that the Egyptian hieratic symbols appearing in the first four lines of one of the papyri fragments were the very ones copied into the left hand column of the *Book of Abraham* text pages of the Joseph Smith Alphabet and Grammar. To the right of each of those Egyptian symbols were written the words and phrases, and in some cases complete sentences which Joseph Smith created under the stimulus of each of the Egyptian markings. And it was this material which Joseph Smith, Jr. published in 1842 as the *Book of Abraham*.

Not all of the *Book of Abraham* text appears in the Egyptian Grammar of Joseph Smith, but all of the text from Abraham 1:4-2:18 has been verified as having originated in this way.[20]

Dee Jay Nelson, a widely known and respected philologist with over twenty years of experience in Egyptology, and who is also an Elder in the Mormon Church, gives us valuable insight into Joseph Smith's methodology in determining the text of the *Book of Abraham* from simple hieratic forms. Nelson translated the "Hor Sensen" text from the papyrus fragment, and then compared this with Joseph Smith's treatment of the same text in his Alphabet and Grammar. Nelson cited, for example, words No. 5 and 6, on line two of the papyrus fragment, and indicated that their proper translation would be "offspring of" or "born of". But the following is what Joseph Smith produced from those two Egyptian words:

> Now after the priest of Elk Kee nah was smitten that he died there came a fulfillment of those things which were spoken unto me concerning the land of Chaldea, that there should be a famine in the land; and accordingly a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea and my father was sorely tormented because of the famine, and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life: But the records of the fathers even the patriarchs concerning the right of priesthood the lord my God preserved in mine own hand: Therefore a knowledge of the beginning of creation and also of the planets, and of the stars, as it was made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day.[21]

Joseph Smith's View of the Negro, And Slavery, 1836

Early in 1836 Joseph Smith, Jr. published his view regarding the servitude of the Negro slave in the South. He first pleaded for a policy of total non-interference in the affairs of the South on the part of the abolitionists of the North. Then he made reference to Genesis 9:25, 26, 27 (KJV) as scriptural support for the "peculiar institution" of slavery in the United States. He quoted the Bible as follows:

> And he said, cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem: and Canaan shall be his servant—God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem: and Canaan shall be his servant.[22]

Smith then proceeded to link that Genesis statement with his current era, in the United States:

> Trace the history of the world from this notable event down to this day, and you

> will find the fulfilment of this singular prophecy. What could have been the design of the Almighty in this wonderful occurrence is not for me to say; but I can say, that the curse is not yet taken off the sons of Canaan, neither will be until it is affected by as great power as caused it to come: and the people who interfere the least with the decrees and purposes of God in this matter, will come under the least condemnation before him; and those who are determined to pursue a course which shows an opposition and a feverish restlessness against the designs of the Lord, will learn, when perhaps it is too late for their own good, that God can do his own work without the aid of those who are not dictated by his counsel.[23]

This extremely literalistic view of the curse of Canaan, which surely is not justified by the larger setting of these three verses, has its counterpart in the *Book of Abraham*. It would be impossible to determine precisely whether the *Book of Abraham* influenced this specific pro-slavery position and its linkage to Noah's enraged, drunken curse of Canaan, as referred to out of context by Joseph Smith in early 1836, or whether it was the other way around. But when one looks at the text of the *Book of Abraham*, (Chapter 1:21-27) it appears that Joseph Smith in 1835-1836 was making the so-called curse of Ham (through Canaanite blood) to extend from the mere condition of servitude to the denial of the right of priesthood to the nineteenth century Negro. It is conceivable that the ordination of Elijah Abel, a Negro, at Kirtland on March 3, 1836, could have raised the problem in the church about the status of the Negro generally, especially with respect to the branches of the church in the slave holding regions of the United States.

Whatever the intent of Joseph Smith in expounding this view of the Negro in the above two texts, it is clear that the ancient papyri from Egypt contained no such information.[24] In this entire matter the literalistic approach of Joseph Smith to the Genesis text cited above is carried forward to its farthest extreme by those who deny priesthood status to the black man today. In this sense, the fact that the Reorganized Church never officially endorsed the *Book of Abraham* provides that church a resource of freedom to break out of the oppressive prison house of scriptural literalism consigning it to an unreal image of the past which greatly inhibits its ministry and influence for good in the present world.

The Reorganized Church's Position on the Book of Abraham, 1852-1970

The very first publication of the body eventually calling themselves the Reorganized Church affirmed the lineal principle of priesthood and cited the *Book of Abraham* in doing so.[25] During the first year of the leadership of Joseph Smith III, Isaac Sheen, editor of the church paper, published a statement supporting the concept of a plurality of Gods which is one of the obvious doctrines of the *Book of Abraham*. His statement is significant in that it documents the esteem felt by Sheen for not only the *Book of Abraham* but also, the idea of plural gods.

> By the quotations of our Utah correspondent from the new translation of the Bible and from the Book of Abraham, it will be perceived that a plurality of Gods is a

> doctrine of those books. Although it is an unpopular doctrine, it is a doctrine of the common versions of the Bible . . . In Gen. 1:9, we read that "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The words "us" and "our" signify more than one person, and those persons must have been Gods, for the work of creation belongs only to Deity . . . . These scriptural evidences, concerning the order of the Kingdom in the exaltation of the sons of God, show that the revelations in the New Translation of the Bible, and in the Book of Abraham, concerning the Gods, all harmonize together. When this doctrine came forth in these books, it became a stumbling block to some people. We hope that the evidence which we have presented on this subject will be advantageous in the removal of their stumbling block out of the way.[26]

Apparently this appreciation for the plural god doctrine persisted in the Reorganized Church, for in October 1866 the Herald Office released for sale Volume I of a *Synopsis of the Faith and Doctrines of the Church*,[27] by request of the April 1865 General Conference.[28] This *Synopsis* was advertised for sale regularly in the *Herald* until November 1867, but Volume II, although planned, apparently was never published. Twenty-two pages were devoted to the subject of the Godhead, which was divided into nine separate categories. The longest of these nine aspects of the Godhead was the six page section on "Plurality of Gods." Many biblical references and citations from the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants were listed in support of plural gods. Then, at the end, the following was added:

> See **Book of Abraham**, in the **Times and Seasons** of March 1 and 15, 1842, or (as reprinted by the RLDS Church in the) **Herald**, Vol. 3, No. 1. See also the last sermon of Joseph Smith the Martyr, and the New Translation of the Bible.[29]

From the above it would seem reasonable to deduce that during the early years of the Reorganization, the *Book of Abraham* was held in rather high esteem, both from the view of lineal priesthood inferred and from the popularity of Joseph Smith's plural god doctrine so evident in its final chapters.

An interesting question centers in the basis on which the *Book of Abraham* gradually dwindled in popularity in the Reorganized Church from this early period to the present. It would be risky to venture too much on this point, but it may be that gradual acceptance by the church of the statement of President Joseph Smith III in May 1865 allowing the ordination of Negro ministers[30] would have diminished the appeal of the racist position of the *Book of Abraham* in this connection. Also, the fact that the Utah Mormon Church canonized it in 1880 would have given the Reorganized Church cause for reservation, especially in the light of RLDS criticism of the Mormon "expansion" of its Doctrine and Covenants in 1876 without the consent of the Mormon membership. The hotly disputed document on plural marriage was inserted in the expanded Mormon Doctrine and Covenants in 1876. It also appeared in the 1878 Edition[31] of the *Pearl of Great Price*, which of course continued to include the *Book of Abraham* as well. Both of these volumes were canonized in 1880 by the Utah Mormon Church. Roughly from this time forward, the Reorganized Church consistently began to take a neutral stand on the *Book of Abraham*. This is best summed up in the semi-official position stated by the co-authors of the multi-volume church history:

> The church has never to our knowledge taken any action on this work, either to endorse or condemn; so it cannot be said to be a church publication; nor can the church be held to answer for the correctness of its teaching. Joseph Smith, as the translator, is committed of course to the correctness of the translation, but not necessarily to the endorsement of its historical or doctrinal contents.[32]

Representative writers of the church from that time until the very recent past have taken the position that Joseph Smith was acting merely as a scholarly translator of the Egyptian language, and therefore, any teachings with which the church might either agree or disagree do not reflect one way or another upon his authenticity as a religious leader or prophet. Implicit in such a view is the freedom granted the church to question his ability as a translator of ancient Egyptian writings, and that is precisely what has happened since the late 1890's. Despite that freedom, and for reasons probably related to the deepseated antipathy which has prevailed between the RLDS Church and the Utah Mormon Church, a number of leading writers of the Reorganized Church have persisted in trying to divorce Joseph Smith from the ideas expressed in the *Book of Abraham*. In so doing they have reasoned that he was merely a "translator," not the author. Some have even questioned the reliability of the documents with which Joseph Smith worked, encouraged, no doubt by the fact that the original papyri and notebook of Joseph Smith were no longer available for scrutiny. But since 1967 this situation, as has already been observed, has been radically reversed. The original papyri are available, qualified Egyptologists have done their work, and the *Book of Abraham* has been shown in the recent two years to be totally unrelated to Abraham.

Even more important, the separate analyses of modern Egyptologists have established conclusive evidences that Joseph Smith's *Book of Abraham* (text and interpretations of the papyri drawings)[33] is not even remotely related to the cultural reality behind the inscriptions and art work on the Egyptian papyri brought to Kirtland by Michael H. Chandler in July 1835.

In view of this, members of the Reorganized Church ought now to consider themselves in a position to weigh all the evidences very objectively and then to make such adjustments in their thinking about Joseph Smith, Jr. as an Egyptologist-translator, as such evaluation might lead them to make in all integrity. Perhaps the Reorganized Church will have the courage and judgment to view the *Book of Abraham* in the way that its President, W. Wallace Smith, seems to be trying to lead its people to view it:

> The Book of Abraham, published by Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1842 at Nauvoo, Illinois,

and canonized by the Utah Mormon Church in 1880, provides much of the rationale for the Mormon Church's denial of priesthood to the black man. I do not consider the Book of Abraham to be anything other than the speculative writings of its author, and certainly neither intended by him nor endorsed officially by the Reorganized Church at any time since its founding in 1852 to qualify as "inspired" writing.[34]

This succinct evaluation by President W. Wallace Smith perhaps needs no further comment here. But it may be helpful to suggest that the *Book of Abraham* represents simply the product of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s imagination, wrought out in the midst of what to him must have been a very crucial and demanding and complex set of circumstances. Involved here was his unending struggle to verify and authenticate a pattern of prophetic leadership amidst a world of contending views, to say the very least. This may call for a forthright affirmation that the *Book of Abraham* is neither a scholarly translation (since Joseph Smith appears not to have had ability in Egyptology) nor any kind of "inspired" translation, as the church has traditionally considered the Book of Mormon to have been.

Above all, let the Latter Day Saint community seek a viable, twentieth century interpretation of the *Book of Abraham* which not only sustains its integrity, but also purges its sense of history.

Richard P. Howard is the historian for the RLDS Church.

---

1. **Times and Seasons**, Vol. III, No. 9, March 1, 1842, pp. 703-706; Vol. III, No. 10, March 15, 1842, pp. 719-722; Vol. III, No. 14, May 16, 1842, pp. 783-784.

2. Oliver Cowdery, "Egyptian Mummies," **Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate**, Vol. II, No. 3, December, 1835, p. 234.

3. Ibid, p. 235
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid, p. 236.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., pp. 236-237.

12. John Whitmer, "The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment," MS, page 76, Located in the Archives, Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

13. Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," **Millennial Star**, Vol. XV, No. 19, May 7, 1853, p. 296.

14. Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," **Millennial Star**, Vol. XV, No. 19, May 7, 1853, p. 297.

15. **Millennial Star**, Vol. XV, No. 22, May 28, 1853, p. 344.

16. Louis C. Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," **Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought**, Vol. III, No. 2, Summer, 1968, pp. 50-52.

17. **Saint's Herald**, Vol. 46, No. 2, January 11, 1898, p. 18.

18. **Brigham Young University Studies**, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Winter, 1968. special insert following p. 178.

19. **Brigham Young University Studies**, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Winter, 1968, special insert following p. 178; **Improvement Era**, Vol. 71, No. 2, February 1968, pp. 40-41; **Diaglogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought**, Vol. III, No. 2, Summer, 1968, pp. 67-68, 92-97.

20. See Dee Jay Nelson, **The Joseph Smith Papyri, Part 2** (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company), pp. 12-21.

21. Book of Abraham text in Joseph Smith's **Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar**, pp. L, M (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company) Photocopy, 1966. Modern Editions: Abraham 1:29-31a, slightly revised.

22. Joseph Smith, Jr., to Oliver Cowdery, letter, published in the **Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate**, Vol. II, No. 7, April, 1836, p. 290.

23. Ibid.
24. Dee Jay Nelson points out that on pp. K, L of Joseph Smith's **Alphabet and Grammar** the symbols (presumably Egyptian) recorded by Joseph Smith as the basis for Abraham 1:21-27 are not any form of ancient Egyptian known to science, and that they also correspond precisely to a part of the papyri which is missing. See Nelson, **op. cit.**, p. 15.

25. Briggs, Jason, et. al., **A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints** (Janesville, Wisconsin: D. W. Scott), 1853, p. 11.

26. "A Plurality of Gods," **True Latter Day Saints' Herald**, Vol. I, No. 12, December, 1860, pp. 280,283.
27. The full title of this is: **Synopsis of the Faith and Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Compiled from the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and other Publications of the Church; With an Appendix, containing an Epitome of Ecclesiastical History and a Chronology of Important Events in the History of the Latter-day Work.** Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Plano, Kendall Co., Illinois. 1865. 448 pp.
28. Conference Minutes, **R.L.D.S. Herald**, Vol. 7, No. 8, April 15, 1865, p. 127.

29. Synopsis, p. 302.
30. RLDS Doctrine and Covenants, Section 116:4.

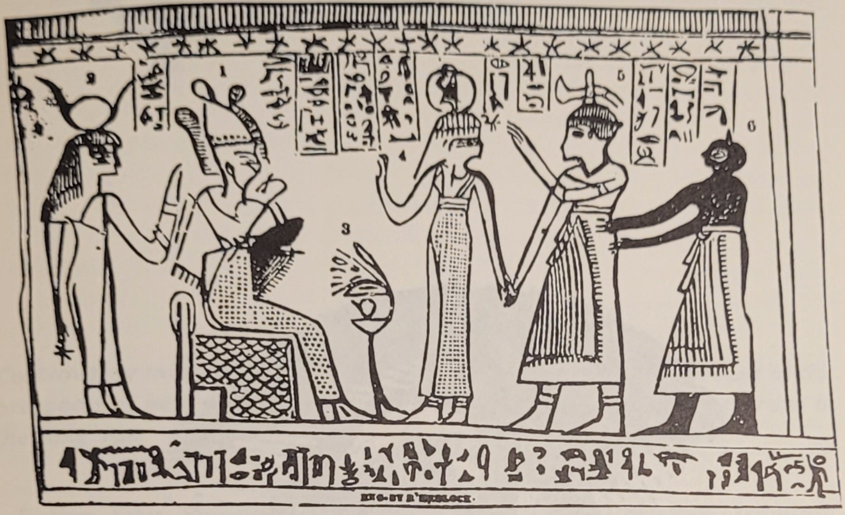
31. An expanded and revised version of the First Edition, which had been merely a new members' tract for the converts to the church in the British Isles, released in 1851 by F. D. Richards, Liverpool, England, containing 56 pages. The Second Edition had 71 pages.
32. Joseph Smith III, and Heman C. Smith, **The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.** Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1896, Vol. II, p. 569.
33. The reader will note the wide divergence between the interpretations of Joseph Smith, Jr. of the figures appearing in the Egyptian burial documents of the late pre-Christian era and those of modern Egyptian philologists. Please turn to the end of this article for a view of what Joseph Smith referred to as "A Fac-simile from the Book of Abraham. No. 3." in **Times and Seasons**, and for a comparison of Joseph Smith's interpretations with those of modern Egyptologists.
34. "Race and Priesthood," **Saints' Herald**, Vol. 117, No. 3, March, 1970, p. 5.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

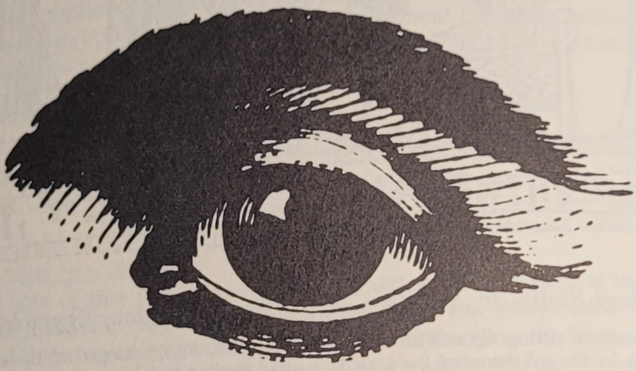
"Truth will prevail."

Vol. III. No. 14.] CITY OF NAUVOO, ILL. MAY 16, 1842. [Whole No. 50

A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.
NO. 3.



Joseph Smith, Jr., 1835-1842	Twentieth Century Egyptologists
1. Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king; with a crown upon his head, representing the priesthood; as emblematical of the grand presidency in heaven; with the sceptre of justice, and judgment in his hand.	1. Osiris, Egyptian god of the dead, and husband of Isis.
2. King Pharaoh; whose name is given in the characters above his head.	2. Isis, wife of Isiris. The star in her right hand denotes life.
3. Signifies Abraham in Egypt; referring to Abraham, as given in the 9th No. of the Times & Seasons.	3. Offering table, or altar.
4. Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt; as written above the hand.	4. Maat, the Egyptian Goddess of truth.
5. Shulem; one of the king's principal waiters; as represented by the characters above his hand.	5. The deceased person being led to the judgment of Osiris.
6. Olimlah; a slave belonging to the prince.	6. Anubis, Egyptian god of embalming.
Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of astronomy, in the king's court.	The Judgment Scene as it appears in the 125th Chapter of the Per em Heru, a funeral text often called the Book of the Dead; numerous examples of which have been discovered.



The Critical Function of "Courage"

Controversy might upset people, but to avoid controversy because of the prospects of better health in the immediate future will be disastrous in the long run.

Latter Day Saints are heirs to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Therefore our faith is an historical faith, as we conceive of God as acting in history. Most specifically, we see God as having acted in Israel and in the events surrounding the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth and in the creation of the Christian Church.

Latter Day Saints are also heirs to the Protestant tradition which has held that the Christian Church became perverted to such an extent that a basic alteration of the Church was necessary. Probably most of the readers of this article would accept the contention that God was at work in the life of Martin Luther, whose theses on the door of the Wittenberg church touched off a revolution that tore the Church apart. Most Latter Day Saints would also accept the idea that God was at work in other reforming movements, such as the Calvinist, Anabaptist, and the English Reformation, as well as in the work of a young man from western New York in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In short, Latter Day Saints believe that God has operated in history not only through Jesus of Nazareth but also through the lives of great patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, and reformers.

The editors of *Courage* would extend this concept to our present day by affirming that we need to discern the activity of God in events such as the struggle against the oppression of war, racism, poverty, and the pollution of his creation. Because of this, we must take history seriously. But while we do this, we must also recognize certain limitations.

As we study the Exodus from Egypt under Moses, we might try to learn how large the Hebrew slave community was, or whether they crossed the Red Sea or the Sea of Reeds. But no matter how accurately we might be able to recover the event, the larger question cannot be answered historically, that is, was God responsible for this successful escape or was this simply an emancipation achieved by human ingenuity? The Old Testament clearly credits God for this achievement (Deut. 26:8,9). This is also true in examining the conquest of Canaan. Did God will the Israelite conquest or was it simply another struggle for a piece of land? Neither can historical study answer the question as to whether Joseph Smith was divinely led or whether he was simply a young man from western New York who had certain abilities and who lived at the right time and place to produce a movement that has over two million followers today. The answer to these larger questions has to be based on a faith assumption. So, even though ours is an historical faith, there are limits to what history can reveal.

Our study, however, can help us avoid making unsound faith assumptions. For example, if in our research we should find that there are at some points differences of viewpoint between the writers of Scripture, then we would be extremely unwise to hold Biblical infallibility as a tenet of our faith, just as we would certainly be quick to affirm that any contradictions in the dogmatic pronouncements of the Pope undermine a faith in the infallibility of the Pope.

If in our study of the Old Testament and in the literature written between the Old and New Testaments — like the Wisdom of Solomon and the Book of Enoch — we find that most of what Jesus taught was completely new, with no precedent in his Jewish heritage, then we might affirm that Christianity constituted a complete break from Judaism. We would say that Marcion (d.c. 160 A.D.) was right — Christianity is something apart quite from Judaism. If, on the other hand, we find that most of what Jesus taught was already found in the Old Testament, and in the intertestamental literature, then we ought not hold a blind faith in the idea that Christianity is radically different from Judaism. Christianity would be better seen as a continuation of Judaism.

If historical study should lead to the discovery that the New Testament Church was organized with deacons, teachers, and priests forming an Aaronic priesthood, while elders and high priests, with various subdivisions in these ranks, formed a Melchisedec priesthood, then Latter Day Saints might be justified in holding the idea that our priesthood is a Restoration of the organizational pattern of the New Testament Church. But what if we should find that at the time of Jesus' death and in the years immediately following, the Church had only apostles, prophets and teachers, and that within a generation these officers gave way to the officers of bishop, elder, and deacon? And what if we find no New Testament basis for certain other officers, like priest or high priest? We would have to conclude that our system is not a Restoration of the New Testament pattern.

We must conclude that historical inquiry can only go so far. There *are* some things which must be held on the basis of faith. But at the same time, it is our conviction that scholarly activity can help us avoid making invalid faith assumptions. Unless we believe that man's reason is not at all a trustworthy tool to use, we must use our God-given ability to study and learn. Granted, there has been a strand of thought in Christianity which has regarded learning as incompatible with true faith. Tertullian (c.160- c.220 A.D.) and certain modern Protestant sects represent this approach. Nevertheless, the predominant strain in Christian thought has held that man should use the intelligence that God gave him to understand truth as best his finite humanity will allow. One of the Catholic Epistles in the New Testament admonished the saints to give an intelligent explanation for their faith (I Peter 3:15).

In publishing *Courage*, we do so on the assumption that there is great need for scholarly study and thoughtful reflection on matters of importance to Latter Day Saints. We believe that this is not simply a luxury which the church could do without. Scholarly study and reflection are necessary in a world that is more highly educated. Because man's knowledge is expanded, we are called upon even more today to make sure that what claims we make can stand critical examination. An intelligent person will not respect an organization that does not recognize the value of its own self-scrutiny. Such an organization bases its beliefs on ignorance. Potential new members will have to be drawn almost entirely from those who are ignorant in areas related to the church's doctrines, and youth raised in such a church can be expected to leave in larger numbers unless they are kept in ignorance.

We believe that any institution must eventually reach the point where either it becomes mature enough to engage in self-criticism, or that its heart will die — even though the outward form may endure long after death. The RLDS Church cannot expect to thrive if it ignores the historical thought of modern man. If the RLDS Church is to survive, its traditions will have to be subjected to the scrutiny of critical investigation. There must be no sacred cows that are not subject to re-examination. We need to recognize that because we are human, we have occasionally made claims that exceed the truth.

We feel the Church has been far too slow in developing sources of self-criticism. Graceland College, Herald House, the Department of Religious Education, and the History Department have occasionally helped meet this need. But too often they have not, and often the controversies they have engaged in were relatively safe controversies.

We feel that *Courage* can fill a real need for independent thought in the Church. Unrestrained by any official connection with the Church, with Graceland or any other institution of the Church, *Courage* can discuss issues that are not at this time discussed in the official organs of the Church. We intend to publish articles from all of the various viewpoints that exist in the Church today.

We realize that some people believe that the wiser policy is to avoid controversy, to try to create unity of thought in the Church by not raising the unpopular thought, be it more ''conservative'' or more ''liberal'' than the generally accepted view.

Controversy might upset people, but to avoid controversy because of the prospects of better health in the immediate future will be disastrous in the long run. The editors of *Courage* believe that the longer we refuse to question our half-truths, the more difficult it will be to correct our errors, and the more discredit we will bring upon the Church. The longer we do this, the more our strategy for holding the allegiance of the next generation will have to be a strategy for keeping our members ignorant.

We hope that in *Courage*, no belief — whether of the editors or someone else — will be too cherished to be subjected to careful scrutiny. Thus no one should write for *Courage* unless he is ready to have his views the subject of critical examination by other contributors to this journal.

Quality of scholarship and writing are naturally important considerations in the selection of articles. But no views will be off limits for *Courage*, whether to the left or to the right of the editors. The editors will naturally insist upon standards of good taste. Ideas, not personalities, should be the subject of criticism.

We realize that we are expecting to accomplish a lot with the publication of *Courage*. Knowing our human limitations, we may well fall short of our goals. But if our objectives are only partially met, the effort will have been worthwhile.

The Executive Editorial Committee

DOCUMENTS

Below we are reprinting an 1883 letter from Joseph Smith III to Lorenzo Dow Hickey, a Strangite. President Smith had considerable correspondence with Hickey. The spirit of the letter seems particularily appropriate today.

Oct 27th (1883)

L. D. Hickey:

Your letter bearing post-mark Oct 24th came to me last night. This is Saturday, the mail leaves this a.m. and will not catch this letter, so that it will not start till Monday, and may not reach your place till after you have left, and so you not get it.

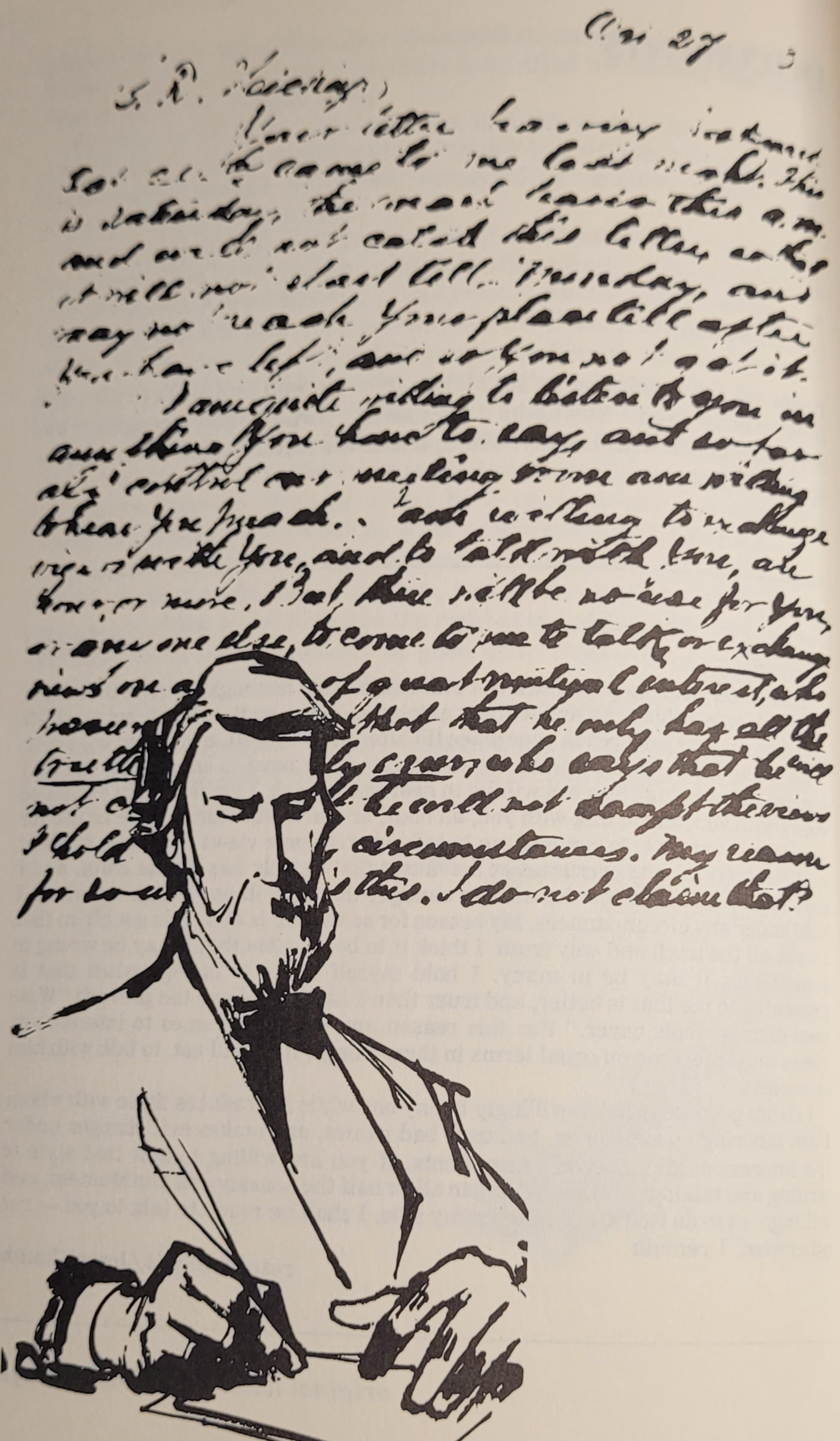
I am quite willing to listen to you in anything you have to say, and so far as I control our meeting room am willing to hear you preach. I am willing to exchange views with you, and to talk with you, an hour, or more. But there will be no use for you, or any one else, to come to me to talk, or exchange views on a topic of great mutual interest, who presumes at the outset that he only has **all the truth**, and I only **error**; who says that he will not **change**; that he will not accept the views I hold under any circumstances. My reason for so writing is this: I do not claim that I have all the truth and only truth. I think it to be possible that I may be wrong in somethings, it may be in many. I hold myself liable to change when that is presented to me that is better, and truer than I have. I believe the proverb "Wise men change, fools never." For this reason any man who comes to interchange views must meet me on equal terms in these things. If he will not, to talk with him is useless.

I do not propose to listen willingly to any one while he traduces those with whom I am laboring as associates, and uses bad names, and makes evil charges under the impression that they are arguments. If you are willing to quit that style of writing and talking; and are willing to allow half the honesty and truthfulness, and willingness to do **God's** will to be on my side, I shall be ready to talk to you — not otherwise. I remain

respectfully/s/Joseph Smith

---

original letter on following page



Oct 27 3

S. R. Haisley,

Your letter bearing postmark [illegible] came to me last night. This is Saturday, the mail leaves this a.m. and would not catch this letter as the it will not start till Tuesday, and may not reach your place till after you have left, and so you not get it.

I am quite willing to listen to you on anything you have to say, and so far as I control my reading to read anything you preach. I am willing to exchange views with you, and to talk with you, an hour or more. But there will be no use for you, or any one else, to come to me to talk or exchange views on a[illegible] of great spiritual interest, who [illegible] that that he only has all the truth [illegible] by a man who says that he is not c[illegible] he could not accept the views I hold [illegible] circumstances. My reason for so[illegible] is this. I do not claim that

EDITORIALS

A Plea for Leadership

There are those in the Reorganization who would be Aristotles, Augustines, Whiteheads, or perhaps even Sartres. But there is no Socrates in the Restoration nor has there been, and those who would be philosophers and kings have not realized that such men rise from the plight of the socratic conscience. Until such a Socrates of the Restoration emerges we shall have no Plato, no Augustine, and probably not even an Arthur Munk or an Eldon Trueblood.

There has been no one to teach us that we must first "know ourselves," that in this knowing of ourselves we may find an expression of our belief. Instead, we are sitting on the doorstep of our childhood and expecting wisdom where there is as yet, no familiarity with the agony of the wise. We have felt the romance of logic and the simplicity of coherence, we have felt the first seeds of doubt, but rarely have we fully experienced the treacherous investigation of our own minds. Those who have made beginnings in this investigation have rebelled and grown cold when such an investigation crept its way into the most secret reaches of the soul. And there are few, if any, who, having made such a trip, still speak out in favor of each man's journey into himself. Yet this is what it means to stand before the terrible court of the mind and hear the judgment of our own convictions; for wise men are not wise until they have passed judgment on their most familiar thoughts, until they have questioned the company of ideas with which they have walked from birth. They are not wise until they have sensed the subjectivity of these ideas which they have cherished, but which are not the result of a view of their self-knowledge. No man who has not tried to save some scraps of his comfort, and who has not also in his conviction of the rediscovery of self, moved ahead alone but boldly, can lay claim to the wisdom of personhood.

The flowering of human insight begins from such an expression of significance and it is such an insight which might produce an honest Aristotle, a Browne, or even a Camus — prophetic men who speak to us of ourselves as we live. At best such a Socrates would have to live quickly; the community would not long remain silent to his demands and he would soon find hemlock placed in his communion tray. But while he lasted, he could draw a unity of hearts.

The knowledge of the self, as a rediscovery to meaning, comes not from the pronouncement of power or from the cautious and concerned overflow of the willing. For such pronouncements are built upon no Socratic base and are already isolated by the lack of common beginnings. These are only ideas rising from the tower of words, not from the dust of our creation. Meaning will come, if it can now come, from the whole of the believer who sees in the search of self a home from which it can be said, "I am a man and nothing of humanity is alien to me." It is not easy to examine ourselves but we who would be human need to know the human message from which to start again — a base from which to grow. And we are desperately in need of a Socratic leader, for it is obvious that without him we shall be ready for no other.

And what will follow if he comes? Perhaps no new edifice on the old land but only men once more remembering that it is they themselves that must know. Those who will follow will come out of themselves when it is time. The present must seek its own coming out if man is to be included as a creature of humanity. Lord God, we need a Socrates. Christ spoke for God; prophets speak for godly men. In all humility, Lord, what we need now are men who will lead us into knowing ourselves by not being afraid of themselves.

Paul M. Edwards

The Search for "All Truth"

Latter Day Saints — as much or more than any other group of people — have strong reasons for preaching and teaching to a pluralistic society that allows and encourages a wide range of personal beliefs. One distinctive element of the Restoration movement (RLDS style) has been that it has permitted its members and its leaders to vary widely in personal convictions from conservative to liberal, from traditional to modern.

Since its inception in the New York of the 1820's, the movement has fostered two principles: (1) the Church's creed is simply "all truth." It is not now, nor ever has been, limited to a statement of doctrine to which all members are obligated. (2) Men as individuals, and the Church as an institution, are committed to the ever elusive search for a more perfect understanding of that "all truth." Individual scholarship has been doctrinally encouraged by such Scriptural admonitions as these: man should learn by "study and faith," God's glory is "intelligence," and that in searching for truth man should "study it out in his own mind" before asking for divine confirmation.

This background has led the Church to encourage its members to think, write, and learn creatively in a wide-ranging field. By doing this it has stimulated the search for truth that it is convinced exists.

The RLDS Church of 1970 faces frightening challenges to its long tradition of pluralism. In the face of these challenges, it is imperative that the Church take a strong stand today that makes clear to the world that it does not intend to limit the creative thinking of its membership. Indeed, it is strange that a Church in which "heresy trials" have been virtually unknown, now seeks to "unify the theology" of its membership.

As the Church seeks to refine and define its mission in a world already saturated with religious movements, it is essential that it do all that is possible to maximize its intellectual potentials. Any move that would limit its position or point of view — from far left to far right — can only be detrimental to the search for its relevance.

We hope **Courage** will aid the quest for truth.

Roy E Muir

REVIEWS

The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Volume 5, 1890-1902. By F. Henry Edwards. (Independence: Herald House, 1969, 680 pp., $10.00.)

In this book F. Henry Edwards seeks ". . . to look in on the church in the 1890's from the vantage point of the 1960's, to seek to understand some of the major forces at work within and without the church, to weigh these in the light of our own experience, and so to learn how we may refine our understanding of the tasks committed to our fathers and to us, and do our part to fulfill them."

No historian can present all the details of even a dozen years of the past. Rather he is compelled to choose from the data available those phenomena which seem most important for his purpose. For F. Henry Edwards' purpose as stated above he chooses to rely upon the selection of material made by the editors of the **Saints' Herald** as a primary source. Where the task of the editors ends, F. Henry Edwards' work of selection begins. Events he elects to emphasize or narrate were chosen from over thirty volumes commencing with January 3, 1891 volume 38 through volume 68 and from volumes of General Conference minutes, reports, Resolutions and other data. It seems inevitable that his own basic ideas or beliefs, expressed or implied, are exhibited in such events of the past with which he chooses to deal. In this sense F. Henry Edwards as in the case of all historians, is biased. This he fully admits: "This is not an impartial record of the story of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints between 1890 and 1902."

The people for whom it was written would not be surprised to discover that the former member of the First Presidency lent "considerable space" to "legislative, administrative matters," or further that the historian, a long standing appointee gave attention to appointments and assignments in his history. The **Herald** he chose as a primary source because it was "the organ of the First Presidency in a way it will never again be possible" echoes again "President Edwards" orientation. But this history was written for the "somebodies," the members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ who surely want F. Henry Edwards to tell it like he sees it. The **Herald** served well to "reflect the interests of the people and in general, changes of content or of emphasis" or to "reflect changes of interest in the body."

While it would seem clear that every historian writes from his own nature, his own date, and his own culture, the reader himself is not without his own nature, bias or culture. Edwards traces the Sunday School movement, the Zion's Religio-Literary Society, and the Daughters of Zion, through the twelve year period.

But more interesting to this writer was the outline of Graceland's beginnings — not because of F. Henry Edwards' selectivity but because of the reader's special interests. So it is with the recording of debates, sermons and articles. Those bearing upon issues deemed significant by the reader will tend to stir deeper interest. The racial strife prompted, among other things, by the ordination and appointment of Priest C. D. G. Taylor, a Negro, encouraged President Smith in 1893 to state his views in the **Saints' Herald**. This position statement quoted on pages 209 through 213 in the light of the 1960's must have been ahead of its time. While President Smith clearly stated "The gospel is alike free and sent to all people of the world without respect of person, for, as saith the scriptures; 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . ' " he was compelled to deal with the perplexing question of miscegenation prohibited by the law in a number of states.

In the light of the 1970's as well as the 1960's President Joseph Smith's dedicatory address in the new Graceland College building on January 1, 1897 is worthy of full attention. F. Henry Edwards records the full address but two excerpts will illustrate the point:

> The intention had in the founding of Graceland was to establish at Lamoni an institution that should be free to all irrespective of faith, or creed. An institution in which an education higher than is possible in the common schools might be obtained; one in which every student should be left free to fit himself for the struggle of human existence among men, without the interference of the ecclesiastical. And, however tenacious we may as a people be concerning our beliefs, we desire that our neighbors, and friends who may think differently than we do, may feel that in Graceland they and their children may find a home of friendliness and peace for educational purposes alone, and not an instrument for the spread of dogma, or the exercise of priestly control and domination. (p. 379)

President Smith said further:

> If asked then, Is the college at Lamoni founded by the church for the purpose of educating men for its denominational ministry? I answer, No. Nor is it to be used as a means of teaching the denominational tenets of the church; the teaching of dogma and church practice to be left to the elders of the church in their calling and the church in its ecclesiastical character as a work specifically belonging there. (pp. 381-82)

Some may still be saying in the 1970's as they did in 1898 that money spent on Graceland could be spent to better advantage in direct missionary enterprises, and that in educating men for the ministry the church was encouraging them "to put their trust in the arm of flesh". The Presiding Bishop in that day was caused to say: ". . . It is doing more good for the work in the world than any five ministers that you have in the field . . ." That was a day when salaries and "running expenses" were but $4,700.19. What will the voices be in 1970? What sway will the anti-intellectuals have against the "educated men of the ministry?" Our historian does supply such outline as will enhance our understanding of some of these major forces at work in the 70's.

Many questions are answered by the outline of the Temple lot suit carried in the February 13, 1892 issue of the **Herald** and related on pp. 141, 236-240, 286,287. After reading the lower court opinion it becomes apparent to even the "somebodies" of our day that the Reorganization made its point even though the case was reversed on technical grounds by the appellate courts.

It is unlikely that conference delegates will stand on the North steps of the auditorium without glancing across the Temple lot occupied by the Church of Christ (Hedrickite) curious about the differences that persist between the two churches. In the light of that query a meeting in conference by officials of both churches was held having as its purpose, the reducing of points of difference. The event was narrated and a copy of the Minutes recorded on pages 382 through 386. The conference took place on January 16-20, 1897. One might speculate whether such a meeting in 1970 would yield anything more.

It came as no surprise to read of the trying years brought about by the disrepute imposed upon the Restoration by Mormon polygamy. The tensions and energies expended to abate the nuisance were significant. The many days expended in defense of the Reorganized "Josephites" seem so wasted as we look upon them from the 60's and 70's.

One could almost find events that symbolized the sentiments, hopes, and dreams of our people in the 1890's. The "Evanelia" was a ship launched in the south seas — the "Gospel boat". One could feel the sense of personal tragedy the saints felt when their ship ultimately was required to take on commercial shipping down to its final resting place on the bottom of the sea. How many dreams went down with her? Items such as this kept the history alive and less of a "Scissors-and-paste" chronicle.

Another man, in a different time and place, may write another history covering the same period but F. Henry Edwards looked at the 1890's in 1960 in the light of his experiences and our experiences. The tasks committed to our Fathers so far as one could glean from the 1890's were not so different than the tasks committed to today's "somebodies" of the Restoration. The fulfillment of such commitments may not be anymore difficult than in their day. It perhaps only seems that way. F. Henry Edwards has made a significant contribution to the "somebodies" — 1970.

William A. Piedimonte

* * *

Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development. By Richard P. Howard. (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1969, 278 pp. $5.95.)

Restoration Scriptures is written about the **Book of Mormon**, the Inspired Version of the Bible, and the **Doctrine and Covenants**; books accepted by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as Scripture. It is written from the viewpoint of a church historian whose historical approach at times is weakened by theological discussions, but after passing through vague irrelevancies, the work settles down to its task and does a credible job.

Had the author been more oriented to communicative media and less oriented with theological development, his first chapter would have been stronger. The problem with which his book is concerned is that of communication, not the theological base of revelation. Insights, even inspirited insights, are hard to communicate. They are modified by the media and by the conceptual base of both the transmitter and the receiver. Words, coming out of the never-never world of the mind are crude images, partially understood and refined by experience. It is in this realm that Joseph labored to transmit that which had come to him by the power of revelation. His inspirited mind had to express to others what was revealed for their benefit.

In the first chapter, "Scripture: A Record of Revelation", the author, seeking to find grounds for "conceptual" inspiration rather than "plenary" inspiration, becomes tangled in the web of theological legerdemain. He places his whole effort on the acceptance of his great "if": If we accept the premis that revelation is always beyond human apprehension, then it follows that the human attempt to articulate the imperfect apprehension of revelation will also be less than perfect and will fall short of conveying the full meaning of revelation at any given point in time." This stand will cause Fundamentalists, Conservatives and Liberals alike to have reservations as to his sound understanding, each at a different level of opinion. The problem seems to be that of a false alternative: either there is total revelation with total understanding or there is total revelation with partial understanding. This rules out the possibility that only that which is apprehended is that which is revealed. If he had kept to his own field of history and the communication thereof, this dilemma would not have been raised.

The author has tackled a monumental task in sorting out from history's jungle those relevant facts which would provide a step-by-step tracing of the evolvement of Restoration Scriptural texts. His use of abbreviations to indicate the various manuscripts are helpful and will lend support to the documentary theory held by many Bible scholars.

His objectives are stated at the close of chapter one: (1) To gain new appreciation of the concrete historical precedents involved in the growth of scriptures, (2) To feel a much closer affinity to the writers of scripture, (3) To see the broad concern of both God and man with the universal, ultimate values of human life, (4) To discover the scriptures to be a contemporary well-spring of resources for personal and corporate living in any age, (5) For the scriptures to become an open window to the Eternal Light sustaining and investing meaning in human history.

He attacks the David Whitmer-Martin Harris-William Smith story of how Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Mormon with evidence of the many emendations. "If ever there was a text in need of refinement and grammatical and language improvement it was the D MS of 1829. Even the greatly improved E MS underlying the first editions proved insufficient to fully satisfy that need in 1830 and 1837." He defends the 1966 edition as "a literary improvement over any previous edition" and offers the sad note, "This effort was rejected by the 1966 World Conference, leaving the RLDS Church with the 1908 edition as its authorized text."

His study of the inspired Version of the Bible is more detailed, taking 125 pages, as compared to 44 pages for the Book of Mormon and 75 pages for the Doctrine and Covenants. He gives close attention to each of the five manuscripts. By means of facsimile pages and parallel copy, he makes comparisons easier for the reader. This is not a work to be read for an afternoon of entertainment. It will need study and evaluation. Parallel studies will need to be made and compared before its real worth will be known. Mr. Howard is to be commended for bringing into this groping age a work that is worthy of study and that is challenging to the intellect.

His parting statement is given as he begins the study of the Doctrine and Covenants, "Revelation is rooted in history . . . Scripture—the record of that revelation — must be studied with historical understanding and perspective if its meanings are to be perceived and appreciated." In this statement he sums up his objectives and hopes written on the pages of his book.

Alfred H. Yale

* * *

The Lion of the Lord. By Stanley Hirshson. (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1969. 372 pp. Illustrations, index. $8.95.)

Once again I marvel at the wisdom of the New York World which in 1873 printed: "It is easy to laugh at Mormonism but it is not easy to account for it." Stanley P. Hirshson's biography of Brigham Young, **The Lion of the Lord**, provides a few good laughs, some interesting comment, and a summarization of 100 years of expose, but offers little light. **The Lion of the Lord** neither provides any new insights into Mormonism nor does it provide much understanding of the phenomenon that was Brigham Young.

In the final pages of his account Dr. Hirshson indicates that "religion uses history to ascertain universal truths" (p. 322) and that " . . . history is more than religion." (p. 322) He promises in the preface to have searched out the long alluded to, but probably non-existent, "secret materials in the possession of the Mormon church" (p. ix) and to have deviated from previous studies by not allowing his work to be half Joseph Smith. In the light of this I was led to believe that the author was trying to derive from the history of the movement something of the genius, or perhaps the divinity, which was Brigham Young. I also felt such an investigation would be conducted in a manner which would go further than repeating a collection of mythological cliches that arose through a series of generations in order to explain, however bizarrely, an unexplainable present. But Hirshson has neither pursued the phenomenon of Young nor has he done any extensive work in new sources. This work on Brigham Young somehow fails to deal with the issue. Instead, an attempt is made to explain the fluid contribution and expression of Brigham Young by listing the events, repeating the stories, quoting the contemporary accounts, and imposing spontaneous commentary on the many and complex images that were his. In many ways the biography is a rehash of Mormon history which draws from the usual sources and which is presented with what must certainly be "tongue in the cheek reporting." I refer to such transition comments as "Satan fought back," (p. 37) or "On July 22 he prayed for power to heal the sick and almost immediately cured everyone in Nauvoo." (p. 35)

Books dealing with early church officials are usually identified as being either for or against "us". Such an identification would be very difficult for **Lion of the Lord**. Certain of the splinter groups will be overjoyed at the expression of their power; other groups will be disturbed by his calm presentation of events they have tried for years to either disprove or live down. For example, there is little doubt that Hirshson saw Joseph Smith as being responsible for the introduction of polygamy — "There Smith informed him (Young), God wished to revive plural marriage, explaining 'that if this principle was not introduced, this Church and the Kingdom shall not proceed'." (p. 41) — and that Brigham was appalled at the suggestion — "instructed to marry again, Young was filled with revulsion." (p. 42)

I am also sure that no serious Mormon will take great pleasure in Hirshson's calm accounting of the activities of Joseph; either his drunkenness ("after an especially trying day Smith arrived . . . and exchanged a copy of his book for a room in the local inn. With his remaining few cents he got drunk." (p. 15) or with his planned seduction of the local women. (p. 44,52) He does relieve Joseph from the burden of some of the wives usually assigned to him, by pointing out that many were not actually wives, Joseph simply slept with them. (p. 186) It is interesting how simply and with apparent ease he deals with Joseph, as well as Brigham and others, as the human creatures they were.

Unfortunately, in **Lion and the Lord**, instead of becoming another study which pays tribute to answering such questions as, why Young was selected as the leader of the church following the death of Joseph in 1844, it becomes a study in how he was able — or simply perhaps that he was able — to be the husband and father he was. The account of Brigham's succession promises interest by suggesting that Joseph's death could have been prevented by the Saints, but he does not pursue it. Other than this, there is little more than another set of contemporary reports on the rise of Young. Little or nothing is offered to account for the fact that this man was able to replace, politically and spiritually, the almost magical Joseph. It is understandable why a text in Mormon history might wish to deal with this by saying "Young soon embarked on a series of power encroachments leading to his eventual designation as prophet, seer and revelator . . . . Young, the most forceful and capable apostle, was ensconced in power," (p. 54) but it hardly seems an adequate conclusion on an indepth study of the **Lion of the Lord**. Nor, is it adequate to pass off Brigham Jr.'s failure to gain power with a remark about his being hurt by scandal.

Instead of dealing with the above questions, a fantastic per cent of the book is devoted to Brigham as father and husband. The chapter dealing directly with the wives is a compilation of the "established seventy," listed by name and number and complete with sealing dates. As documentation he quotes such varied accounts as Stenhouse's "Tell it All," Brodie's **No Man Knows My History**, and that great historic catch-all "Unidentified Clippings," Utah State Historical Society. More interesting, if less revealing, was the following chapter which dealt with those who got away. And these were the best of the bunch.

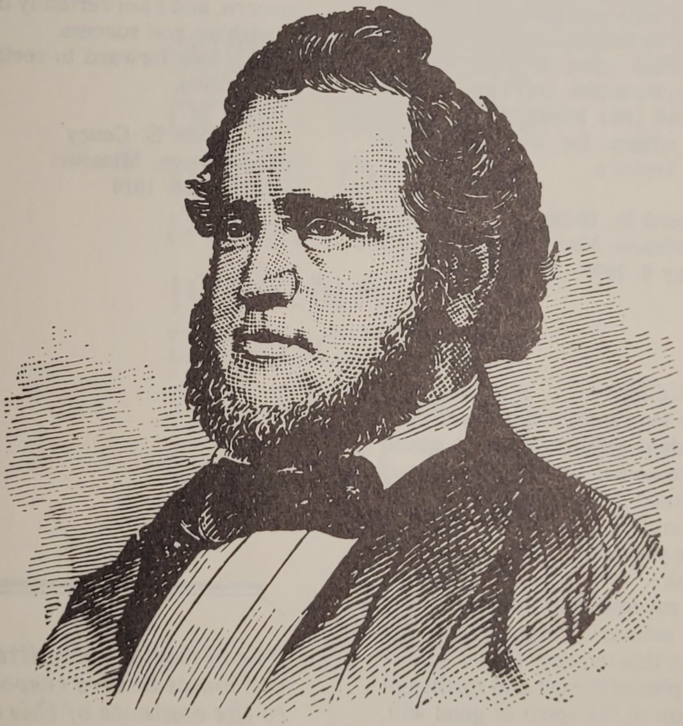
Perhaps my disappointment rests on the fact that Hirshson does not deal in any adequate fashion with Young, the pioneer. There is no understanding, let alone any discussion, of the fact that this remarkable man provided the leadership which brought water to the desert, civilization to a lake bed, and made pioneers and empire builders out of New England Puritans and Birmington mechanics, as well as Iowa farmers. It does not seem legitimate that this essential contribution can be written off — or simply discarded — by relating, once more, vivid accounts of seduction, massacres, wars, purges, revelations and political threats. Brigham Young may have been many things, some of which were unusual, perhaps violent and immoral. There is little doubt either that his conduct personally was a strange combination of the mystic and the material and that he exhibited most of the accompanying values and evils of these views. But he cannot be written off as a buffon, a sex maniac, or a tyrant and I fail to understand a man of Stanley Hirshson's capabilities being willing to let it go at that.

Nor can I follow the summary conclusion in the final pages. For example, I fail to recognize "revenge" as the most important motive for polygamy (p. 123) any more than I can accept that the major reason polygamy failed was the railroad or the introduction of "eastern finery." (p. 324) While certainly not accepting the Mormon claim that polygamy breeds a higher plane of men, I don't find much help in Hirshson's mis-directed historic logic. The fact that William Hooper Young, Brigham's grandson, was charged with murder in 1902 does not seem to me to disprove the Mormon contention. (p. 325) Nor for that matter does the fact that an RLDS office building looks down on the temple lot in Independence defy the Mormon vision of a Jackson County Zion. Nor does it disprove Henry

Bywater's prediction "We shall some time go back and live peaceably in Jackson County . . . ," (p. 325) for the Reorganization office building also looks down on a fine Mormon information center.

I saw in this work some hopes for insight. His hinting at Mormon anti-intellectualism could have been pursued and some attention to the development of Church theology rising out of the European mission would make a good study, particularly because of Brigham's role in that development. But these were not pursued and I fear the **Lion of the Lord** will rest on the shelf while those interested will continue their call for a really good biography of Brigham Young.

Paul M. Edwards



Brigham Young

LETTERS

Interest in "Courage"

To the Editors:

I have received a copy of your proposal for the journal **Courage**. It looks very interesting, and can be very helpful to all concerned. I shall look forward to the first issue.

I do hope you will keep your board broadly based, representing many points of view and areas of concern. It would be unfortunate, I believe, if the journal were to become the platform for a few, and I am certain this is not your intent.

Best wishes for a healthy and fruitful venture.

Reed M. Holmes
Independence, Missouri
February 6, 1970

To the Editor:

I have long sensed the need for an independent publication that would stimulate sound inquiry among our people and it is only on this basis that real conviction can emerge. I welcome your efforts to publish such a journal.

Your success with **Courage** will depend primarily upon your approach to this inquiry. If you adhere to principles of honest and forthright journalism in the spirit of good will, your success will be assured.

I definitely plan to be among your initial subscribers.

Charles A. Thompson
Lamoni, Iowa

To the Editors:

Just a note to acknowledge your letter relating to your intent to establish a new independent journal.

I believe that this can have a constructive effect upon the church if the search for truth is carried on in the spirit of mutual respect and concern, and I am certainly desirous of wishing you success.

I will look forward to seeing your first edition.

Duane E. Couey
Independence, Missouri
February 16, 1970

The editorial committee welcomes letters responding to the contents of this and subsequent issues of Courage.

SUBSCRIBE NOW.
DON'T MISS AN
ISSUE OF THE
INDEPENDENT
JOURNAL OF
DIALOGUE FOR
THE RLDS FAITH
COURAGE

COURAGE: *A Journal of History, Thought and Action*

- to enter into dialogue with persons associated with the RLDS movement
- to support a means for independent scholarly expression
- to keep current on issues facing the movement, its history, and its expectations
- to keep alive the media for responsible criticism, concerned recommendations, and honest response

Courage will be published in September, December, March, and June. Please complete the following subscription blank now. We need you and you need *Courage*.

Cut along this line and mail to The Venture Foundation.

*Name*______________________________

*Street Address*______________________________

*City*__________________ *State*__________________ *Zip*________

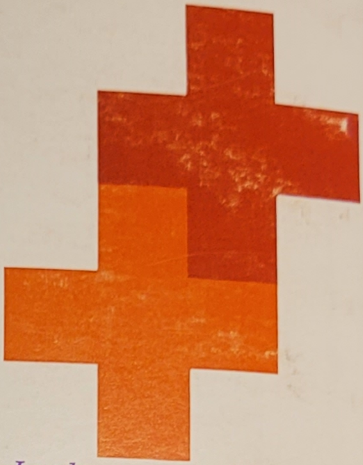
☐ Regular subscriber, $6.00 per year

☐ Student subscriber, $4.00 (Sept., Dec., March only)

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me

Make checks payable to The Venture Foundation. Send to the Venture Foundation, 106 E. South, Lamoni, Iowa 50140

TAKE COURAGE



CONTENTS

Articles

A Question of Means or Ends: The Debate Over Religious Education — *Donald D. Landon* — 5

The Church As I See It: Now and in the Future — *Chris B. Hartshorn* — 13

The Doctrine of the Church: A Reply to Clifford Cole — *Harold N. Schneebeck, Jr.* — 19

On Church-Relatedness and the Purposes of Graceland — *William T. Higdon* — 25

The "Book of Abraham" in the Light of History and Egyptology — *Richard P. Howard* — 33

The Critical Function of "Courage" — *Editorial Committee* — 49

Document

Joseph Smith to L. D. Hickey, 1883 — 53

Editorials

A Plea for Leadership — *Paul M. Edwards* — 55

The Search for "All Truth" — *Roy E. Muir* — 56

Reviews

Edwards, *Church History*, Vol. 5 — *William A. Piedimonte* — 57

Howard, *Restoration Scriptures* — *Alfred H. Yale* — 59

Hirshon, *The Lion of the Lord* — *Paul M. Edwards* — 60

Letters — 64